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**GOING 'GLOBAL':**  
**'STUDIO GHIBLI', 'GLOBAL ANIME'**  
**AND THE POPULARISATION**  
**OF A 'MEDIUM-GENRE'**

Lawrence William Carter

Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD

2018

Centre for Media and Film Studies

SOAS, University of London

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis is concerned with the Disneyfication of the last three Studio Ghibli films directed by Hayao Miyazaki and how the globalizing agent of Walt Disney Studios has transformed the paratextual marketing campaigns of these films. This thesis poses the following research questions: to what extent can we describe *Howl's Moving Castle / Hauru no ugoku shiro* (Hayao Miyazaki, 2004), *Ponyo on the Cliff by the Sea / Gake no ue no Ponyo* (Hayao Miyazaki, 2008) and *The Wind Rises / Kaze tachinu* (Hayao Miyazaki, 2013) as Disneyfied texts? How do the adherence of Hollywood star-images act to Disneyfy the Ghibli (para)text? How do the auteur-star and author functions involved in the re-marketing of Ghibli products contribute to the Disneyfication systemscape? Which aspects of the English-language promotional paratexts point directly to the application of Disneyfication? It is the hypothesis of this thesis that Disneyfication practices can be primarily located within the application of star-images and auteur brand-names to the promotional campaigns of the aforementioned triptych. First, this thesis assesses the various theoretical frameworks pertaining to the area of Disneyfication and how this concept relates to the case studies addressed in this thesis. Secondly, this thesis demonstrates through an overview of both animation history and global consumption trajectories the point at which Disneyfication is adhered to the Ghibli text. Next, this thesis focuses in on the specificities of Disneyfication at work by looking closely at which specific star-images and brand-names are attached to the films in order to contextualise them for a Western audience. Finally, it demonstrates how these facets combine by deconstructing key facets of the three promotional campaigns. In short, this thesis exists to examine the

role of Disneyfication within the late era of Studio Ghibli animation and what the implications of these effects are upon the marketing strategies deployed within the American (and global) marketplaces.

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## INTRODUCTION:

### STUDIO GHIBLI AND DISNEYFICATION

This thesis is concerned with the Disneyfication of the last three Studio Ghibli films directed by Hayao Miyazaki and how the globalizing agent of Walt Disney Studios has transformed the paratextual marketing campaigns of these films. This thesis poses the following research questions: to what extent can we describe *Howl's Moving Castle / Hauru no ugoku shiro* (Hayao Miyazaki, 2004) – hereafter *Howl* – *Ponyo on the Cliff by the Sea / Gake no ue no Ponyo* (Hayao Miyazaki, 2008) – hereafter *Ponyo* – and *The Wind Rises / Kaze tachinu* (Hayao Miyazaki, 2013) – hereafter *Wind* – as Disneyfied texts? How do the adherence of Hollywood star-images act to Disneyfy the Ghibli (para)text? How do the auteur-star and author functions involved in the re-marketing of Ghibli products contribute to the Disneyfication systemscape? Which aspects of the English-language promotional paratexts point directly to the application of Disneyfication? It is the hypothesis of this thesis that Disneyfication practices can be primarily located within the application of star-images and authorial brand-names to the promotional campaigns of the aforementioned triptych. First, this thesis assesses the various theoretical frameworks pertaining to the area of Disneyfication and how this concept relates to the case studies addressed in this thesis. Secondly, this thesis demonstrates through an overview of both animation history and global consumption trajectories the point at which Disneyfication is adhered to the Ghibli text. Next, this thesis focuses in on the specificities of Disneyfication at work by looking closely at which specific star-images and brand-names are attached to the films in order to contextualise them for a Western audience. Finally, it demonstrates how these facets

combine by deconstructing key facets of the three promotional campaigns. In short, this thesis exists to examine the role of Disneyfication within the late era of Studio Ghibli animation and what the implications of these effects are upon the marketing strategies deployed within the American (and global) marketplaces.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **DEFINING DISNEYFICATION**

What is Disneyfication? In truth, the term has been applied to a vast array of theoretical approaches and studies that whittling down a single meaning would be an impossible task. It is better instead to be aware of Disneyfication's various, often contradictory, connotations. A working definition might be that Disneyfication is the application of the values of the Disney Company to a secondary text, space or process. This definition evidently omits whatever values one might subjectively perceive the Disney company to propagate and therein lies the difficulty of pinning down a single definition. As the following literature review highlights, the values ascribed to Disney by various scholars over the years has evolved with time. Yet, reading broadly across the most pertinent of these views, it is possible to ascertain a certain cohesion which incorporates multiple aspects one might group under a Disneyfication umbrella.

Whilst the most popular term remains Disneyfication, other academics have chosen to discuss 'Disneyization' (Bryman, 1995; Bryman, 1999; Bryman, 2004), 'Disnification' (Ariel Dorfman and Armand Mattelart, 1975:62), the quality of being 'Disneysque' (Wells, 1998:26), the 'Disney universe' (Real, 1973:70), the 'Disney vision' (Jackson, 1993:10) and, as Janet Wasko notes (2001:112), numerous other authors refer to 'Disney culture' and other similar terms. Despite being described by some as 'clumsy' (Bryman, 2004:5) and 'accompanied by negative baggage' (2004:10), it is the opinion of this thesis that by using 'Disneyfication' one is able to describe all of the above phenomena under the single umbrella term which is most commonly in use and that, moreover, any negative connotation of this specific term is not commonly pre-determined and perceived as such. Moving forward, this thesis will exclusively utilise the umbrella term of Disneyfication, although it shall for the most part allow individual academics to voice their own phrasing – such as Alan Bryman's insistence upon Disneyization – on the understanding that any processes described therein also apply to Disneyfication.

Before any discussion of Disneyfication can begin it should be noted that, for two complementary reasons, there exists a wealth of *seemingly* relevant material. Firstly, as Wasko notes, there are 'countless books, essays, and articles on Walt Disney, his contribution to animation, the history of the Disney company, and the analysis of its products and their creators.' (2001:4) As Wasko rightly points out, the corpus of scholarship centred on Disney largely consists of repetitive biographical re-examination and industrial revisionism, as well as literary or textual analysis of the

Disney films themselves; indeed, an entire edited volume – *Debating Disney: Pedagogical Perspectives on Commercial Cinema* – has recently been released which details the Disney canon’s representation of gender (Maertens, 2016; Vraketta, 2016; Porter, 2016), ethnicity (Hurley, 2016, Brode, 2016; Russell-Cook, 2016) and numerous other issues. Another notable book is *Disney Discourse: Producing the Magic Kingdom*, which includes chapters which touch on Disney’s relationship to the family (Lewis, 1994) as well as cultural imperialism (Yoshimoto, 1994). However, whilst unquestionably related to this project, these sources do not share the same focus as this thesis – as my case studies are not the animations or theme parks managed by Disney – and as such I ignore the majority of such material which does not elucidate the *processes* of Disneyfication as a whole rather than an individual Disney text. In contrast, as Wasko notes (2001:177), the second discipline in which Disneyfication theories are deployed are those pertaining to urban planning (Bryman, 1999; Bryman, 2004; Choi, 2012) and, perhaps because there is no single text to become distracted by, such studies do usefully elucidate the process of Disneyfication, and thus this thesis shall utilise this resource.

Secondly, most of the discourse which does address Disneyfication takes the form of re-treading adaptation analysis and as such there is a disappointing lack of depth to many studies. As a very brief example, one can isolate three notable articles on how ‘[t]he Hans Christian Anderson tale *Lille Havfruei* [...] was moulded into the Classic Disney formula with numerous changes in both the story and the characters.’ (Wasko, 2001:134) First, A. Waller Hastings (1993) and then Finn Mortensen’s (2008)

comparison between Andersen's mythology and the Disney version, both of which find expected disparities between a fairy tale and a film released over one hundred and fifty years apart. This is followed by Deborah Ross' more complex three way comparison between *The Little Mermaid* (Ron Clements and John Musker, 1989), *Ponyo* and the Hans Christian Andersen fairy tale (2014). To be fair, Ross' study is able to go the extra step further and note that more changes occur in Disney's version than in Miyazaki's, writing that 'Miyazaki follows Andersen, as Disney did not' (2014:27). None of these articles reference each other at all – each starting almost from scratch as if in an academic vacuum – and moreover, the textual approach and focus on literary, moral, aesthetic or narrative changes between literature and film(s) has remained unaltered in over two decades. Very little progress has been made and correspondingly an equivalent degree of commentary can be formulated on such studies, other than that Disney – a film studio known for adapting folk lore into animation – necessarily changes a text in the process of translation. This literature review and, more broadly, this thesis, shall not give credence to every scholar that deploys the Disneyfication terminology, electing to focus only on those which further the wider debate on Disneyfication's accompanying connotations and processes; in short, by examining those papers which highlight not the text of the script but rather the script of the (para)text.

Nearly fifty years ago, and two years after the death of Walt Disney in 1966, Richard Schickel penned a book entitled *The Disney Version: The Life, Times, Art and Commerce of Walt Disney*. This was not the first exploration of Disney in scholarly circles – as

Wasko comments '[i]n the 1930s, cultural pundits and film critics celebrated Disney as art, while members of the Frankfurt School often used Disney characters such as Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck as examples in their discussions of the culture industry.' (2001:4) However, for the time of his writing, Schickel's biography of Walt Disney's life and contribution to American culture was notable for being uncharacteristically critical. Schickel is one of the first to suggest the creation of a constructed persona, commenting that 'Walt Disney's greatest creation was Walt Disney' (1986:44). He goes on to describe what we might understand today to be the process of Disneyfication as

that shameless process by which everything the Studio later touched, no matter how unique the vision of the original form from which the Studio worked, was reduced to the limited terms Disney and his people could understand. Magic, mystery, individuality [...all] were consistently destroyed when a literary work passed through the machine that had been taught there was only one correct way to draw. (1986:22)

For Schickel, Disneyfication represented three primary concepts: artifice, homogenisation and the forfeiture of depth. Frances Clarke Sayers, writing in 1965, also identified a similar pattern in Disney's strategy in adapting the 'original form' of the fairy tale, writing that Disney's 'treatment of folklore is without regard for its anthropological, spiritual, or psychological truths. Every story is sacrificed to the [animation] 'gimmick'' (1965:602). It is from this grounding that modern arguments of

Disneyfication are often framed: that is, the juxtaposition between the Disney animated text and the classic fairy tale, with many academic studies (Hastings, 1993; Zipes, 1995) discussing Disneyfication purely in terms of literary adaptation. A recent edited volume – *It's the Disney Version! Popular Cinema and Literary Classics* – devotes its entire length to comparing Disney films with their originating source materials, including two chapters which explicitly employ Disneyfication terminology (Mortensen, 2016; Payne, 2016). However valuable these examinations may be, their methodologies cannot usefully be applied outside of a literary adaptation environment. As this thesis is concerned not with a full re-production but rather a re-marketing of the (para)text, these studies provide little more than useful background reading for my research.

Returning to the actual discernible qualities of Disneyfication and building upon those outlined by Sayers and Schickel above, Gene Walz adds that '[o]ften used pejoratively, [Disneyfication] denotes the company's bowdlerization of literature, myth, and/or history in a simplified, sentimentalized, programmatic way.' (1998:51) Walz goes on to comment that 'Disneyfication [...] regularly reduces complex character and grand narratives to predigested formulas.' (1998:51) Once more, we see similar themes emerge from the debate; Disneyfication is again described as a simplifying, homogenising, 'depthless' (Bryman, 2004:9) process in the context of adapting folklore narratives. Walz does offer renewed insight into the process however, as he posits the existence of a 'formula' which is applied uniformly across numerous texts. This finding is echoed by Robert Haas, who locates within Disneyfication 'a formulaic approach to

the text.’ (1995:82) Hastings writes that ‘Disneyfication [...] homogenizes individual creations into a simplistic narrative sameness’ (1993:90). I argue that this formula designed to maintain a ‘narrative sameness’ informs much of Disneyfication and is especially noticeable when viewed across multiple (para)texts – a factor which many individual fairy tale comparisons can overlook. Critically, this implies that Disneyfication is a phenomenon driven by agency and not a passive process and that, in order to maintain this uniformity, a policy of self-censorship must be ongoing. That is to say, Disneyfication actively ‘delimits the circulation of contradictory material that may lead to the “paradigmatic disarray” of its texts [...] and its “wholesome” corporate image.’ (Sandler, 1998:6). In investigating this formula for narrative sameness, this thesis attempts to map what Derek Johnson terms the ‘unified corporate footprint of [the Disney] conglomerate’ (2013:3).

A number of academics also identify complementary connotations to the above: the rewriting of cultural history (Giroux, 1995:45), innocence (Haas, 1995:76; Sandler, 1998:4; Wells, 1998:224; Wasko, 2001:118) and the sanitization of content, culture and history (Wasko, 2001:113; Ross, 1999:134; Matusitz and Palermo, 2014:97; Bell, Haas and Sells, 1995:7; Haas, 1995:79). Moreover, Disneyfication has also been politicised and deployed as a framework for specific agendas as various interpretations have suggested the term is intrinsically connected to Americanization (Wasko, 2001:113; Aronstein, 2016:130; Sparks, 1998; Matusitz and Palermo, 2014:96) and capitalism (Dorfman and Mattelart, 1975:62). Combining all of these connotations together, Karen Klugman summarises the consensus by positing that Disneyfication is

'the application of simplified aesthetic, intellectual or moral standards to a thing that has the potential for more complex and thought-provoking expression' (1995:103). Reading across these definitions, this thesis will now move forward and look in detail at how Disneyfication and the Disney studio are perceived by three leading scholars in the field, namely Bryman, Wasko and Paul Wells, and how these views impact upon my approach to the subject matter of this thesis.

Bryman's perspective of Disneyfication, or as he calls it Disneyization, is perhaps the most revelatory in the field and his analysis reveals a number of facets to the process which will be of use within this thesis. For Bryman, Disneyfication is best characterised as 'a set of processes that are circling the globe and which are to do with the provision of a framework for making goods, and in particular services, desirable and therefore more likely to be bought.' (2004:175) His point here anticipates Scott Lash and Celia Lury's conception of globalization which is that it is *brands* rather than *commodities* which circle the globe (2007:4-5) but Bryman's position pushes the argument further, postulating that it is not *brands* but *a set of processes* involved in the marketing of products and, by doing so, 'spread the canon of consumerism and to provide an infrastructure for it' (2004:157). Building upon the earlier work of Stacy Warren's Disneyfication study (1994), Bryman records that Warren's writings on Disneyfication locate a 'breach between production and consumption' (2004:9) attained 'through the visual removal of all hint of production and the blanketing of consumption with layers of fantasy so that residents are blinkered from seeing the actual labor processes that condition and define their lives' (Warren, 1994:92). This incisive point perfectly reflects

the case study upon which this thesis is centred: the paratextual materials which provide the framework for making goods – in this case Ghibli films – desirable to the Western audience act to elide the original production of the text with a ‘layer of fantasy’.

Bryman goes on to identify four dimensions of Disneyfication: ‘theming, hybrid consumption, merchandising, and performative labour’ (2004:vii) and then a fifth notion, namely ‘control’ (2004:131) which Bryman disconnects from the remainder because as ‘a feature of Disneyization [...it] is more of an *enabling* one rather than an aspect of it *per se*’ (2004:131, emphasis in original). He goes on to briefly define the concepts thus: theming is ‘the application of a narrative’ (2004:15); hybrid consumption is the means whereby ‘the forms of consumption associated with different institutional spheres become interlocked with each other’ (2004:2); merchandising is ‘the promotion and sale of goods’ (2004:2); performative labour is ‘the rendering of work [...] as akin to a theatrical performance in which the workplace is construed as similar to a stage’ (2004:103); and control is, simply put, the methods by which the consumer is both surveyed and guided by the producer (2004:131-55). This thesis contends that all five of these facets are visible in the Disneyfication of Ghibli texts, including, but not limited to: the themed narrative of Disney’s co-star pairings; the hybrid consumption of the text alongside various paratexts, including DVD special features; the merchandising of Ghibli film posters on the online Disney Store website; the performative labour of Hayao Miyazaki and John Lasseter’s relationship evident in a number of DVD special feature paratexts; and the controlled availability of

both theatrical and home video releases to maximise profit potential. In short, these five concepts provided by Bryman provide a primary indicator of precisely when Disneyfication can be observed in the re-marketing of Ghibli texts.

Bryman's final assertion relates to a pair of postulations which complement one another. First, Bryman suggests that

*anticipatory localization* [...occurs] when entering a new market, based on their knowledge of local conditions and customs, a service firm anticipates the likely receptiveness to its services and how they are to be delivered by fine-tuning them to the host culture [..., whereas] *responsive localization* [...occurs when,] as a result of its contact with local conditions and culture, a firm feels compelled or inclined to adapt its services and how they are to be delivered. (2004:162, emphasis in original)

That is to say, differing degrees of Disneyfying localization will occur depending upon how familiar the firm is with the target market. In the context of Ghibli's Disneyfication, this thesis argues that as Disney became familiar with adapting the Japanese text their approach shifted from an anticipatory approach to a responsive one. Secondly, Bryman also distinguishes between

*structural and transferred Disneyization*. The former is to do with a collection of underlying changes that are merely exemplified by the Disney theme parks. Transferred Disneyization occurs when the principles associated with the Disney theme parks are reassigned to another sphere, such as a shopping mall. (2004:12, emphasis in original)

Here, Bryman hints that whilst a given strategy of Disneyfying policy might be implemented in the original iteration of a product, this same policy might be inexpertly reassigned across ostensibly similar markets with little alteration. In the context of Disney re-marketing Ghibli texts, one could argue that their initial marketing strategy was transferred from pre-existing Disney campaigns, yet, as time and understanding progressed, a more subtle structural approach was decided upon. Taken together, these two distinctions create a scenario which describes the temporal shift in Disney-Ghibli paratextual environments perfectly. The re-marketing decisions made by Disney in 2004 must initially employ a transferred, anticipatory localization strategy copied from a pre-existing Disney template, whereas, by the time of *Wind's* 2013 release, the scales shift in favour of a structured, responsive localization approach, wherein each (para)text is translated on a case-by-case basis.

Wasko does not dwell long upon the concept of Disneyfication itself, but instead focuses on the Disney studio. Nevertheless, her contribution as to what values the Disney Company cultivate can then be re-appropriated as further indicators of Disney's influence in the re-marketing of Ghibli products. For Wasko, Disneyfication entails

'aggressive marketing' (2001:2) as well as 'recurring characters and familiar, repetitive themes' (2001:3). Whilst such descriptors could describe a number of media conglomerates, what sets Disney apart is that, across the consumer base, there is a 'consistently uniform understanding [...] of the essence of "Disney."' (2001:218) She goes on to add that Disney's signifiers are 'carefully coded and controlled, and not polysemic and open' (2001:218), noting that this phenomenon can be explained by the fact that Disney 'insists upon [...] its own self-definition and in its incessant promotion and marketing. The company repeats endlessly that it is about "family," "magic," "happiness," and "fun." And, over and over, people refer to Disney as "family," "magic," "happiness," and "fun."' (2001:218) The paratextual analysis within this thesis will address the uniformity of this brand message, particularly with regards to the family audience which Disney allegedly targets.

The second principle that Wasko identifies is that of a premeditated policy of synergy (2001:70) and that, as a result, Disneyfication can be identified as 'the process by which Disney's magic and fantasy are deliberately manufactured' (2001:1). She goes on to comment that, when studying Disney, rather than a single commodity one must focus on the brand which is 'being formed around media and entertainment products [...which] cut across media and other forms of entertainment.' (2001:184) This conceptualisation again relates to Lash and Lury's (2007:4-5) notion that it is *brands* which circulate the globe rather than *commodities*, but goes further into intimating a calculated connection between the two. That is, the constructed Disney brand is comprised of 'individual units' (2001:71) of various commodities and that in order to

deconstruct the Disney brand one must first interrogate the synergy which encircles them. By choosing three paratextual case-studies, this thesis is able to demonstrate how concepts of theming and constructed meta-narratives are synergised across multiple paratexts, thus establishing a broader promotional brand strategy.

Wasko's final point relates to a specific period in Disney's history, specifically the period in the 1990s known as 'the New Disney' (2001:32) when the Disney company had only recently come under the control of Michael Eisner and his associates, who came to be known as 'Team Disney' (2001:32). According to Wasko, Team Disney instigated four key strategies which dominated Disney's policies towards the 1990s. This is the same period in which the Disney-Tokuma Deal ('The Disney-Tokuma Deal', 2003) was affirmed and thus the Disneyfication of Ghibli products will be heavily influenced by these directives. One of these strategies has already been discussed above – the matter of corporate synergy – but the three remaining policies are interconnected and are all intimately involved with Disney's approach to re-constructing the Ghibli paratext. Paraphrasing from Wasko's account, the three strategies are: the creation of corporate partnerships and strategic alliances; the limiting of financial exposure by at least in part encouraging profit-making avenues which 'use other people's money' (2001:35); and diversified expansion wherein the company was commanded to breach new markets, employ new technologies and generally broaden its business interests (2001:34-5). In the context of Studio Ghibli's relationship with Disney, one can appreciate not only the value to which such an opportunity presented to Disney – as Ghibli formed a corporate alliance with them *and*

their partnership represented both a limitation of financial exposure and the diversification of interests, which allowed them access to additional marketplaces and target audiences – but also one becomes aware of Disney’s vested interest in maintaining the image of the Ghibli film as exotic entertainment quite distinct from its primary brand identity. This thesis takes this revelation into account when analysing paratextual marketing strategies and attempting to locate the reasoning behind the deployment, or omission, of certain brand-names and inflections.

Wells’ prominence within the field of modern animation studies is undisputed and in many ways his book – *Understanding Animation* – injected a renewed intellectual vigour into the discipline. Like Wasko, Wells does not linger upon the concept of Disneyfication specifically, but he does uncover four crucial aspects of the Disney identity which influence discussions of Disneyfication. Firstly, and perhaps most obviously, Wells outlines the obvious point that Disney holds a degree of dominance over the animation industry. He claims that the studio ‘essentially put animation on the map’ (1998:3) and that this dominance both ‘ghettoised the [animated] form’ (Wells, 1998:3) and ‘established Disney as synonymous with ‘animation’. This has led to animation being understood in a limited way.’ (Wells, (1998:24) Whilst Disney’s dominance might at first seem self-evident, one might argue that, as a result, to some extent every hand-drawn, computer-generated or animated imagery is an example of Disneyfied content purely on the basis of its form. In ‘Chapter One – Animation: From Cartoons to Anime’ this concept of what might be termed ‘first wave Disneyfication’

will be elaborated upon and this thesis will separate this branch of Disneyfication from secondary waves resulting directly from the Disneyfication of Ghibli paratexts.

Wells' second point is that Disney's dominant style of animation is characterised by 'the non-realist agenda of the 'cartoon'' (1998:26) and that 'hyper-realism [...] fundamentally defines the films of Disney, and those who emulate the studio's style.' (1998:25) Here Wells sets out that Disney's stance on ontology, precisely because of its Disneyfying dominance, informs the nature of other animators. Wells defines the properties of this hyper-realist style as

[t]he design, context and action within the hyper-realist animated film approximates with, and corresponds to the design, context and action within the live-action film's representation of reality [...t]he characters, objects and environment within the hyper-realist animated film are subject to the conventional physical laws of the 'real' world [...t]he 'sound' deployed in the hyper-realist animated film will demonstrate diegetic appropriateness and correspond directly to the context from which it emerges [...t]he construction, movement and behavioural tendencies of 'the body' in the hyper-realist animated film will correspond to the orthodox physical aspects of human beings and creatures in the 'real' world. (1998:25-6)

In short, one symptom of Disneyfication can be identified through the recognition of a hyper-realism aesthetic, which closely follows both the laws of physics and the conventions of Classical Hollywood Cinema (Bordwell, Staiger and Thompson, 1985). Whilst this thesis is not dealing with moving-image animated pictures directly, it is examining static film posters containing hand-drawn images and these designs will be analysed for evidence of a hyper-realist, Disneyfied aesthetic.

Thirdly, whilst not utilising the term 'Disneyfication' as such, Wells does make the critical observation that 'Disney [...] is a metonym for *an authorially complex, hierarchical industrial process, which organises and executes selective practices within the vocabularies of animated film.*' (2002a:104, emphasis in original) Here, Wells makes several points and perhaps most relevant to this discussion is that Disney can infer more than the media conglomerate itself and that, as a metonymical moniker, it can also imply the *process* of Disneyfication. Moreover, he outlines that Disneyfication is first and foremost an industrial phenomenon with multiple underlying processes and that, as a result, pinning down a single author for any single act is inherently problematic. This thesis continues this understanding and, rather than attempting to locate an individual author, searches for the sites of authorship which are most prominent within a given paratext. Furthermore, as should by now be clear, it is my argument that Disneyfication is a multi-faceted set of practices and no single symptom can confirm its influence on its own.

Fourthly and finally, building on Eleanor Byrne and Martin McQuillan's separation of the Disney text from the Disney narrative (1999:35), Wells goes on to note that

in differentiating the 'text' and 'narrative' [...] Byrne and McQuillan identify the way in which the Disney 'text' may become overdetermined in its possibilities, while the Disney 'narrative' carries with it a degree of enunciative specificity that appeals to openness, emotional response and aspiration *before* it may be grounded in quasi-political discourses. (2002a:113, emphasis in original)

That is, a Disney 'narrative' – the discernible single message encoded within a given (para)text – is a distinct entity from the Disney '(para)text' – the presented content as a whole which, by its nature, is open to a multitude of different readings – and that this allows the possibility that the narrative and text may be understood entirely separate from each other (Wells, 2002a:118). In the context of analysing Disneyfied paratextual materials, this postulation echoes Wasko's earlier point regarding a 'consistently uniform understanding' (2001:218) of what might be termed the singular, intended 'narrative image' (Neale, 2000:160) presented by a paratext, despite the fact that the para(text) itself might connote a myriad of meanings.

## DISNEYFICATION AS GLOBALIZATION

It should be acknowledged that numerous authors have chosen to debate issues pertaining to the globalization of media and the spread of film cultures, although not all of them use the same terminology. For example, rather than discuss globalization previous academics have described a 'world cinema' (Nowell-Smith, 1996; Dennison and Lim, 2006), which focuses on the 'relationship between film studies and area studies' (Dennison and Lim, 2006:8), or a 'transnational cinema' (Lu, 1997; Ezra and Rowden, 2006; Higbee and Lim, 2010), which tends to examine elements of diaspora, regional cinemas and the relationship between the national and the transnational (Higbee and Lim, 2010). A whole host of volumes do discuss globalization in cultural terms more generally, notably including Mike Featherstone (1990), Roland Robertson (1992), Jameson and Miyoshi (1998), John Tomlinson (1999), Richard Lee (2006) Jan-Erik Lane (2008) and Jack Lule (2012). All of these texts interrogate globalization on a broad scale in relation to cultural practices, national economies and media networks in a depth that this thesis cannot hope to replicate. However, my case study of Disneyfied Ghibli texts does not fit neatly into any of the above approaches because the translation process does not occur on a (trans)national or regional level, but between specific *corporations* and their precised patterns of associated global flows, as pointed out in 'Chapter Two – Distribution: The Fantasyscape and the Systemscape'. That is to say, Disneyfication, as a transnational component of the globalization of world cinema cultures, has a particular set of characteristics, as outlined above, which distinguish it from these broader conceptualisations. As such, the approach taken in this study is to focus solely upon Disneyfication as a single aspect of the wider forces of globalization,

which might otherwise include the regional transnationalism of Ghibli's dissemination in Asia or the re-branding of Miyazaki's films in the context of transnational film festivals.

However, it is my position that the findings of this thesis do reflect upon the broader processes of globalization. As a number of academics have pointed out (Bryman, 2004; Matusitz and Palermo, 2014; Wasko, 2001) Disneyfication is intrinsically related to globalization. This is partially due to the grounding from which previous academics framed the Disneyfication debate; as Wells notes, 'Dorfmann and Mattelart's work [...] re-interrogated Disney's WASP capitalist agenda within the wider parameters of an 'Americanisation' or a 'Globalisation' thesis' (2002a:108). Yet what is the nature of this relationship? Bryman writes that 'Disneyization is depicted as a globalizing force in that it is spreading in various ways and degrees to different parts of the globe.' (2004:158) This implies that Disneyfication is not equivalent to the overarching principles of globalization which pertain to 'global interconnectedness [...] or the global diffusion of practices' (Matusitz and Palermo, 2014:92), but rather could be described as a portion of the wider whole. Bryman goes further, by suggesting that Disneyfication is uniquely placed to act as 'a lens through which the nature of modern society can be viewed, as well as a way of thinking about issues to do with consumption and globalization' (2004:vii). Wasko clarifies the point by positioning Disney as a 'special case' (2001:63), adding '[t]hough Disney is not the only multinational company to take advantage of globalization trends, the international prominence of the Disney brand [...] should draw special attention to these business practices.' (2001:102) Moving forward on this

basis, Disneyfication can be utilised as an important analytical tool describing certain facets of a wider globalization process.

Yet Disneyfication is not the only the tool in the academic arsenal and, as Bryman notes (2004:162), a number of more general theories have previously been propagated along similar lines, including: 'glocalization' (Kraidy, 2001; Rigby and Vishwanath, 2006; Robertson, 1992; Andrews and Ritzer, 2007; Ritzer, 2007), 'grobalization' (Matusitz and Palermo, 2014; Ritzer, 2007), 'hybridization' (Pieterse, 1995; Kraidy, 2017), 'Walmartization' (Bosshart, 2007; Finne and Sivonen, 2009) and, perhaps most pertinently, 'McDonaldization' (Ritzer, 1983; Bryman, 2004:1-13). It is thus worth taking a moment to describe how Disneyfication differs from the above approaches. To begin with, Disneyfication is distinct from hybridization due to the company's strict policy on authorship. Jack Zipes comments that, in the context of Disneyfied fairytales, Disney's famed 'signature has obfuscated the names of Charles Perrault, the Brothers Grimm, Hans Christian Andersen, and Carlo Collodi.' (1995:21) Wells confirms this phenomenon, by exclaiming that Disney's claim to authorship is validated by 'fundamentally denying inscription to anyone else' (2002b:90). In other words, by its nature Disneyfication attempts to deny a secondary entity the agency with which Disney might hybridize, which is not to say that it is always successful; there are examples throughout this thesis where certain aspects of the (para)text have escaped total Disneyfication and accept a hybridization between Western and Japanese motifs. Another similar principle, Walmartization, is characterised by the axiom 'faster, better, cheaper' (Matusitz and Palermo, 2014:99), which, to some extent, is reflected in

Disneyfication's profit driven ideology (2001:101). However, Walmartization pays more heed to 'the interaction of the global and the local' (Matusitz, 2014:100) whereas, as shall be demonstrated, Disneyfication does not always prioritise glocalization.

This leaves just three principles – McDonaldization, glocalization and globalization – all of which are inextricably linked to Disneyfication in a plethora of ways but are, to varying extents, discernibly distinct. Popularised by George Ritzer in 1983, McDonaldization refers to 'a society [...] which emphasizes *efficiency, predictability, calculability, substitution of nonhuman for human technology, and control over uncertainty.*' (1983:372, emphasis in original) These principles are very similar to those suggested by Disneyfication; indeed, Bryman suggests a significant 'overlap' (2004:132) whilst Ritzer and Allan Liska combine the two terminologies in their description of 'McDisneyization' (1997:98). Bryman's concept of Disneyization is a complementary response to Ritzer's original McDonaldization rhetoric, and the two principles can be seen as 'parallel processes' (2004:13) which 'co-exist' (2004:28). Bryman goes on to postulate that 'Disneyization and McDonaldization are both *systems*, that is, they are ways of presenting or producing goods and services [...] the two companies are merely *emblems* of the underlying processes associated with their respective systems.' (2004:160, emphasis in original) Bryman's definition of Disneyfication and McDonaldization as systems is key, as it frees this thesis from discussing solely texts produced by Disney, and allows us to discuss the effect of a foreign (para)text passing *through* the Disneyfication system. However this revelation has an impact beyond the individual (para)text; Bryman continues that

what is striking about Disneyization and McDonaldization is that they are not to do with the global diffusion of *products* [...nor] the spread of well-known brand names [...] they are concerned essentially with the diffusion of *modes of delivery* of goods and services. (2004:158, emphasis in original)

This point is key and resonates with a critical presupposition of this thesis; Studio Ghibli as a product and as a brand has not necessarily undergone complete Disneyfication, but rather that Disneyfied elements are evident within the system governing modes of delivery – in this case, the paratextual marketing materials of a given film. Bryman’s points above neatly define the core principles behind both McDonaldization and Disneyfication and yet, as alluded to above, there are some key differences. Following on from his last point regarding modes of delivery, Bryman writes that ‘McDonaldization relates primarily to a mode of delivery in the sense of the *production* of goods and services [...] Disneyization is a mode of delivery in the sense of the *staging* of goods and services for consumption.’ (2004:158-9, emphasis in original)

Again, this distinction benefits the subject matter of this thesis: rather than focus on the production of the text, my paratextual case study of Disneyfication highlights the staging of the Disneyfied paratext. A further disparity that Bryman highlights is that ‘McDonaldization is considerably more prone to creating a sense of homogeneity than Disneyization’ (2004:167), adding that ‘Disneyization seeks to create variety and difference, where McDonaldization wreaks likeness and similarity.’ (2004:4) This division brings us to the final distinction to be made, namely the division between

Disneyfication, glocalization and globalization. Bryman postulates that the wider force of globalization could be split in two: similarity and homogenization on the one hand, and heterogenization on the other (2004:162). Using Bryman's earlier distinction, in such a simplistic division one might pair homogeneity with McDonaldization and heterogeneity with Disneyfication. However, as outlined below, the opposing principles of glocalization and globalization could also be discussed in these terms.

The more recognised term, glocalization, was established in 1992 by Robertson through merging the words 'global' and 'local' (Bryman, 2004:162) and is characterised by the principle that 'the globalisation of a good or service is more likely to succeed when it is adapted specifically to each local culture in which it is marketed.' (Matusitz and Palermo, 2014:94). In short, 'glocalization' inherently encourages the creation of differing modes of delivery in order to appeal to various local markets; Robertson himself positions the principle as relying upon 'the insistence on heterogeneity and variety in an increasingly globalized world' (1992:131). Conversely, Ritzer's (2007) description of 'globalization' – 'a combination of the words 'growth' and 'globalisation'' (Matusitz and Palermo, 2014:92) – is less concerned with the welfare of the target market as the agency performing the delivery. Jonathan Matusitz and Lauren Palermo explain that '[g]lobalisation alludes to the imperialistic goals, desires, and needs of big businesses [...] to settle in diverse areas of the world so that their supremacy, impact, and profits can grow.' (2014:92) The two principles are categorically opposed, as noted by Ritzer writing in 2007, who comments that 'growth imperatives of organisations' (2007:xiii) – that is, the effects of globalization – 'impose

themselves on the local' (2007:xiii) – thereby negating the viability of glocalization practices. This idea is echoed by Matusitz and Palermo who write that, in contrast to grobalization, 'glocalisation [...] implies no universalism of globalisation.' (2014:94) Thus, one can define the broader process of globalization as containing within it the two contradictory process of glocalization and grobalization (Matusitz and Palermo, 2014:93-4).

Navigating these multiple dichotomies can be problematic if one assumes a straightforward binary relationship. Just as Bryman pairs homogeneity with McDonaldization and heterogeneity with Disneyfication, Matusitz and Palermo similarly pair grobalization with homogeneity and glocalization with heterogeneity. One might, taking the argument one step further, logically then pair McDonaldization with grobalization and Disneyfication with glocalization. However, this overdeterministic division is unhelpful, and, in fact, contradicts Matusitz and Palermo's hypothesis that Disneyfication acts as a process of grobalization (2014:96-9). I argue that, whilst there is merit in Matusitz and Palermo's argument that Disneyfication may be read as a grobalization process – one only need to look at the steady proliferation of their theme parks overseas (Bryman, 2004; Choi, 2012) – there is clearly a case to be made for Disneyfication to act as a glocalizing process. Bryman advises that

[i]n describing Disneyzation as a globalizing force, there is a risk of a simplistic globalization or Americanization thesis that depicts symbols of American culture spreading by design across the globe and riding roughshod over local

conditions and practices, creating an homogenized world in their wake.

(2004:161)

Bryman's point is that it is easy to exaggerate the globalizing forces at work within Disneyfication when there is clearly elements of glocalization evident as well. This is supported by specific studies centring on Disneyfication, wherein, as Wasko writes, it is clear that 'the company often adjusts its policies and strategies in other countries.'

(2001:63)

All of which leaves this thesis in the position of describing Disneyfication – itself an aspect of globalization – as a concept which contains within it intellectual space for both heterogeneous, glocalization practices *and* homogenizing, globalization ones, wherein perhaps the balance is slightly weighted in favour of the former. That is to say, over the course of the Disneyfication of a given product one might always observe a certain degree of glocalization, but the extent of this translation is determined by the degree to which globalizing factors influence a specific paratextual environment. In the context of this thesis, concerning the Disneyfication of Ghibli paratexts, the paratextual environment here is determined by the marketplace, which is to say, the (para)textual environment of *Howl's* entry to the American marketplace is distinct from *Howl's* later campaign within the UK marketplace, *despite the paratexts themselves remaining largely the same*. Building from this grounding, this thesis postulates that each Ghibli (para)text can be described as first being subject to glocalization upon entry to the American market and then, when transitioning the product for English language

markets abroad and because no significant change influences the (para)text itself, the globalization model takes prominence and favours the now-Disneyfied (para)text over local preferences. This assertion will be explored in more detail in 'Chapter Two – Distribution: The Fantasyscape and the Systemscape', but before examining this in detail this thesis must first outline the research methodologies which inform such an analysis.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **THE DISNEY FAMILY AUDIENCE**

Having now outlined the subject of this study – Disneyfication – I shall now briefly summarise the methodologies employed in its examination. Finola Kerrigan writes that '[a]s films are made to be watched (consumed), there is a *need* to focus on the audience' (2010:6, my emphasis), going on to note 'filmmakers and marketers have an understanding of the different film audiences that exist, and how to engage them' (2010:6). Before discussing examples of re-dubbing stardom within the Disneyfied paratexts themselves, it is first worth interrogating the context of their 'variant audience appeals' (Denison, 2008b:141). A number of academics have described a 'Disney family audience' (Haas, 1995; Miller and Rode, 1995; Bryman, 2004; Lewis, 2013; Wasko, 2016) and yet many of these accounts problematize the concept. Bryman adds to this point, noting that 'Disneyization means making it appropriate to

children as well as adults' (2004:10). There are three factors at work here, which together characterise the triptych case study as laid out in this thesis.

Firstly, adults are the gatekeepers for children's entertainment. Susan Miller and Greg Rode point out that 'Disney must "sell" to designated teacher/parent/caretakers, adults with money to spend, who may never see the products they buy' (1995:96), which leads to a situation wherein there is a 'constructed *audience* we do not see [that] is comprised of dutiful adults who relay Disney movies to children.' (1995:98, emphasis in original). Bryman elaborates on this point, noting that

Walt once remarked that he made films for adults, not for children. In a sense, he was being disingenuous too, because his films typically appealed to both adults and children. It is the latter who would typically ask to be taken to the cinema to see his films and to be bought Disney merchandise. But what he was also saying [...] was that unless adults also found the movie and its concept appealing, they would not take their children to see it or buy its merchandise, even when confronted with a torrent of pestering. (2004:89)

That is to say that, although a given film may be primarily aimed at children, the 'variant audience appeal' must be broad enough to also appeal to adults, as they are the constructed audience of gatekeepers who enable children to access Disney content. For *Ponyo*, the target audience of the original text itself is much lower in age

than previous Ghibli productions; Hayao Miyazaki himself has stated in regards to *Ponyo* that 'I wanted to make something that would entertain kids that are five years old' (quoted in Welk, 2010:1). As such the casting policy that was applied to *Ponyo* was to appeal to a very young demographic through the casting of Noah Cyrus and Frankie Jonas. Yet Disney must still appeal to the constructed audience of adult gatekeepers and, thus, blockbuster stars like Liam Neeson are necessary to ensure that both children and adult are attracted to the film.

The second point is that Disney stretches the definition of family to the extent that sometimes 'products are specifically designed for adults.' (Wasko, 2001:185)

Paradoxically, Disney manages to maintain this family reputation despite the fact that it is involved with

increasingly more vivid and overt portrayals of violence and sexual[ity...] produced by Disney under other labels. Thus, Disney is able to remain extremely influential, if not dominant, in the marketing of children's and family entertainment, even as it expands into other lines of business. (Wasko, 2001:2)

Wasko goes on to note that 'the company now also distributes [...] films oriented to nonfamily audiences that certainly do not have the Disney look or feel, or even the Disney name [...] and thus would not be considered "Classic Disney."' (2001:110) Here, Wasko observes that Disney can produce family content by distancing its primary

“Classic Disney” brand identity and releasing such products under a subsidiary brand-name. This situation is explicitly represented in the paratextuality of *Wind*, where numerous stars and producers equate the text with the family label despite the film’s mature content. By releasing the anime under the Touchstone label, Disney is able to continue marketing the film as family-friendly without overly complicating the family associations held by its primary Disney brand-name.

The third and final point is that the family label must remain all-encompassing. Wasko records that in order to be as profitable as possible, Disney’s productions must target ‘a much wider audience or number of consumers than the “family” audience [...of] parents and children.’ (2001:185). She goes on to note that ‘targeting families means attempting to appeal to *different* age groups.’ (2001:185, emphasis in original). This resonates with Miller and Rode’s observation that Disney products appeal to ‘consuming adults, [...] nostalgic and still politically immature “adult children,” and [...] children’ (1995:96), and that the ‘adult child’ (1995:87) category actively resists ‘artificial divisions between supposed audiences’ (1995:101). That is to say, Disney films must appeal to a broad range of consumers, not just the very young or those adults drawn in by mature content. Of the three films I have chosen for my study, *Howl* has perhaps the broadest reach in terms of audience appeal. Although there were fewer child characters present in the narrative than previous Ghibli films, child audiences were able to relate to the film through *kawaii* characters, or, as Sandra Annett describes them, ‘*kyara*’ (2014:182), like Prince Turnip and Calcifer. Younger demographics could identify with such characters because they relied less on dialogue

and more on visualisation to express their emotions; Prince Turnip bouncing more enthusiastically when content and Calcifer growing or shrinking in size to reflect his mood. Yet at the same time these *kawaii kyara* had an appeal beyond the realm of child audiences and were also used to attract adult audiences. Calcifer in particular enticed the adult audience through featuring heavily in the merchandising branch of the marketing campaign, which included not only the more traditional toys aimed at the child audience but also practical goods like kitchen utensils. Yet the facet which renders *Howl* a valuable case study in the context of its variant audience appeal is the targeting of the elderly through re-dubbed star-images, a group which conventionally is not accounted for in the Disney family demographic. Instead, *Howl* charms the elderly demographic utilising two approaches: directly through the narrative via the exploration of age related issues expressed within the character of Grandma Sophie; and via a considered casting policy which employed actors an elderly audience would be more likely to be familiar with, including Lauren Bacall and Jean Simmons.

### **STARDOM**

Whilst there have been a number of studies into star theory and how star-images can be deployed to sell films (Gledhill, 1991; Albert, 1998; Austin and Barker, 2003; Basuroy, Chatterjee and Ravid, 2003; Kerrigan, 2010), the existing literature which most informs the star theory utilised in this thesis is Richard Dyer's discourse concerning the 'star-image' (1986:3), Barbara Klinger's notion of intertextual digressions (1991:120), Paul McDonald's concept of the 'star-as-brand' (2013) and,

specifically in terms of animation, Rayna Denison's discussion of both 'pairing stars' (2008b:140) and 'star clustering' (2008b:142). Dyer notes, 'we are dealing with the stars in terms of their signification, not with them as real people [...] we never know them directly as real people, only as they are to be found in media texts' (1979:2). Following on from Dyer's framework, my approach to stardom will be to deconstruct the 'structured polysemy' (Dyer, 1979:3) behind a given star-image and attempt to uncover on the level of the paratext 'the finite multiplicity of meanings and affects they embody and the attempt to so structure them that some meanings and affects are foregrounded and others are masked or displaced' (1979:3). As such, the focus of this thesis is fixed on the signification of the star-image within a given promotional campaign, which is to say how the 'star-as-brand' is specifically deployed in promotional paratexts. It will also utilise Klinger's notion of 'digressions', which create a break in the consumption of a film through 'a reaction precipitated by an intertextual link between moments in the text and promotional epiphenomena. The spectator is momentarily diverted from the linear flow of filmic elements by this commodifying association' (1991:120). In other words, it will attempt to pinpoint which intertextual digressions an audience is intended to draw within the promotional materials of Disneyfied Ghibli paratexts and, thereby, uncover the themed narrative of Disneyfication specific to the campaign.

Studies of stardom within the field of animation are still in their infancy and much more work needs to be done. Chris Pallant writes that '[a]lthough Richard Dyer has written extensively on the issue of film stardom [...] the discipline of star studies

stimulated by his texts has largely neglected the field of animation.’ (2011:102) Part of this lack in scholarship is because, as Wells points out, there are truly three star systems which govern a single character: the animator(s) who communicates movement through the animation of the character (1998:104), the voice actor who provides the auralty of the character (2002a:114), and the merchandisable characters like Woody and Buzz Lightyear who are, Wells argues, stars in their own right (2002a:165). Indeed, in the context of the paratextual analysis of trailers, Keith Johnston discusses a fourth candidacy for stardom, the ‘special effects star’ (2009:96), which is to say, a particularly impressive visual feat that provides a similar degree of star appeal as any of the above. Given such complexity, it is perhaps unsurprising that little scholarship has been carried out in the field. There have, however, been a few notable observations, such as Pallant’s examination of the ‘extra-cinematic’ casting of Orson Welles in *Transformers: The Movie* (Nelson Shin, 1986) and how Welles, ‘because of his name, if not performance, would have appealed as a way to increase Western interest in what was a markedly anime product’ (2011:103). Following on from this grounding, this thesis attempts to show how various Hollywood stars have increased Western interest in anime products.

Pallant goes on to note that ‘[t]hroughout the history of animation, casting has been dominated by the principle of aural ‘typage’, with actors being chosen because they *sound* how the character should.’ (2011:103, emphasis in original) Yet an in-depth analysis indicates that recent vocal castings have taken into account not only auralty but visuality too. In her article, ‘Star-Spangled Ghibli: Star Voices in the American

Versions of Hayao Miyazaki's Films', Denison shifts the discussion of stardom away from a blinkered focus on visuality and towards a discussion of audio-visuality. That is to say that the texts that comprise a star-image are not purely visual, or indeed aural, but instead always audio-visual (Denison, 2008b:143). She expands upon this point by writing that

the dominant conceptualization of stardom is an image-based phenomenon traceable through the physical appearances of the individual across a network of media texts. This emphasis on stars as image, or on the way audiences have responded to the look of stars, means that there are currently several methodological obstacles that must be overcome before stars can be reconnected to their audible signs. (2008b:130)

Here, Denison identifies that, although stardom should always be considered in an audio-visual context, there remain methodological obstacles in discussing a star-image in terms of aurality. The most obvious obstacle remains a lack in academic language, and English more generally, to adequately describe the complexities of the human voice in terms of 'the level of pitch, accent and pacing' (2008b:143). Whilst this thesis does utilise a small degree of aural analysis, it is primarily concerned with connecting the aurality of a star with the visuality of their star-image. Denison notes that 'the star voice can be successful because it invokes a physical star persona' (2008b:143). The suggestion that stars can be recognisable by their voice alone, and that this recollection process in the viewer can manifest itself in a visualisation of the star-

image in question, is a critical development in stardom theory. Using such a formula, one can construct a model of stardom where a performer's star-image 'hinges not *just* on the way they look, but on the way they *combine* the voice with the visual in every performance, producing an 'image' of them as fully rounded audiovisual star performers' (Denison, 2008b:143, emphasis in original).

The star analysis that is contained within this thesis re-combines the aurality of the star with their appearance in various paratextual promotions for a given film, as well as their previous performances prior to starring in the Ghibli text. Its primary focus is not performance but promotion; that is, examining the differing ways in which 'stardom can be used to sell' (Denison, 2008b:144). Using such a methodology, one is able to isolate what the paratextual star-image is intended to signify and how the deployment of that star-image fits in with the broader process of Disneyfying Ghibli content.

The American versions of Studio Ghibli texts, and in particular those films directed by Hayao Miyazaki, utilise the connection between the visuality of a star and their vocalisations extremely effectively. As Denison comments, compared to 'other Japanese animators [...] the most significant aesthetic difference owned by Miyazaki's films is not a visual difference but an aural one. In America, star-studded casts have been providing new 'American' interpretations of Studio Ghibli's films' (2008b:129-30). Due to the partnership between Ghibli and Disney, the English language versions of Ghibli texts are able to afford highly recognisable stars to facilitate the American re-dubbing process. This has had the impact of transforming the Western consumers'

reading of the text and 'making them no longer Japanese but star-spangled Japanese-American co-productions' (Denison, 2008b:144). This process of re-dubbing is the primary site of one particular Disneyfication process: the accentuation of performative labour. By providing the 'digression' (Klinger, 1991:120) of a Hollywood star voicing an anime character, as well as several of these stars appearing prominently in promotional paratexts accompanying the Disney version of the film, the performative labour of Disney's re-dub casts fulfils Warren's conceptualisation of Disneyfication noted earlier: the 'removal of all hint of production and the blanketing of consumption with layers of fantasy so that residents are blinkered from seeing the actual labor processes that condition and define their lives' (1994:92). As such, the re-casting of star-images is a key site in the processes of Disneyfication.

In conducting her analysis, Denison notices that the stars which Disney casts to voice Ghibli characters can be discussed in terms of binary sets. That is to say that the star-images voicing two major characters often complement one another and so can be described as being 'paired' (Denison, 2008b:141). Her study uncovers a recurring 'formula' (2008b:140) employed as part of the Disney localization strategy wherein 'stars with experience in voice work with those with little or no experience' (2008b:140-1). Specifically, in her deconstruction of the re-dubbing of *Kiki's Delivery Service / Majo no takkyūbin* (Hayao Miyazaki, 1989), *Laputa: Castle in the Sky / Tenkū no shiro Rapyuta* (Hayao Miyazaki, 1986) and *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind / Kaze no tani no Naushika* (Hayao Miyazaki, 1984), Denison (2008b:141) records the star-pairs of Kirsten Dunst and Phil Hartman, James Van Der Beek and Mark Hamill and

Uma Thurman and Patrick Stewart respectively. This addition of the star pair formula is a clear example of Disneyfication's application of a themed narrative and thus by deconstructing the nature of this narrative one can ascertain the goals which Disneyfication aims to accomplish.

Denison goes on to write of this pairing phenomenon that

this suggests several possibilities. First, that a seasoned voice star might 'rescue' film projects where the other star's performance might be lacking. Second, that the doubling up has other benefits, providing networks or clusters of stars for these films – stars with variant audience appeals. Third, and most vitally, that stars with voice acting experience are an essential part of Disney's casting policy. (2008b:141)

Each of the three possibilities that Denison suggests raises more questions about Ghibli, stardom and the degree of Disneyfication. Firstly, can a performance be wholly 'carried in the voice itself' (Denison, 2008b:143)? Is the experience desired by Disney limited to feature length animation vocal performances or can we also factor in experience in live-action productions? Secondly, what are the observable benefits of the star-clustering concept? Which target audiences are specifically targeted by each star-image within the star-cluster? Thirdly, does the type of experience that Disney desires differ between various Ghibli re-dubbed films and therefore different target

audiences? How does the Disney casting policy operate in order to overcome obstacles in the marketing of products? The following analysis will aim to answer these sets of questions by deconstructing how stars are paired in *Howl*, *Ponyo* and *Wind*.

Firstly, I look at Christian Bale (*Howl*) and Jean Simmons (*Sophie*) in *Howl*. As a star-pair they are interesting because they problematise Denison's notion of a seasoned voice star rescuing their counterpart, as each star brings different types of experience to the text. As stand-alone stars, both project complex star-images which are constantly adapting and therefore specific to the moment of consumption rather than the point of production: Bale can be discussed in terms of what might be termed anachronistic stardom and, additionally, since her death in 2010, the debate concerning Simmons can arguably be categorised as pertaining to what might be termed as a form of revisionist consumption. Judith Mayne points out that 'inconsistency, change and fluctuation are characteristic of star images' (1993:128) and in this vein I have chosen to demonstrate how the paratextual deployment of both Bale and Simmons has fluctuated since the point of production, so that an audience viewing these paratexts today might be influenced by these shifts in star-image. Utilising the methodology of transhistoric campaign analysis, I argue that these star-images' digressions must be revisited to include an anachronistic, revisionist approach as this accounts for a break between the Disney text and the Disney narrative (Byrne and McQuillan, 1999:35), as well as allowing for continued (para)textual consumption well beyond the temporality of a film's initial release.

Secondly, I study Noah Cyrus / Yuria Nara (Ponyo) and Liam Neeson (Fujimoto) in *Ponyo*. This particular star-pair addresses Denison's comment that a varied star-cluster can appeal to differing target audiences: Neeson appealing to the older, cult audience because of his action genre past and Cyrus drawing in a younger, pop music audience through her familial connections and associations with the Disney brand-name. Individually, one can postulate that Neeson is redefining Geraghty's categories of stardom by evolving his star-image over time in order to appeal to a broad range of adult audiences. In contrast, because of the reduced agency implied by her position as a child star, Cyrus provides a particularly apt site for a 'commutation test' (Thompson, 1991) with her Japanese counterpart, Nara. Through comparing Cyrus and Nara, one can begin to comprehend the differing casting policies that Ghibli and Disney practise.

Thirdly, I examine Joseph Gordon-Levitt (Jirō) and Emily Blunt (Nahoko) in *Wind*. The interplay between these two star-images is thought provoking when questioning Denison's point regarding Disney's casting policy requiring stars with vocal experience. Gordon-Levitt also embodies the complex evolution of the star-image of a child star which transitions into a more mature persona, thereby appealing to several facets of the Disney family demographic. In addition, Blunt also represents the tendency towards casting star-clusters that have connections in the real world as demonstrated by her family members that also performed in *Wind*.

## AUTHORSHIP

This thesis takes a post-structuralist approach to authorship, wherein what is being discussed is not the personality of an author (Sarris, 1962), nor their signifying 'structure' (Wollen, 1981) but their signification to a subjective reader. This state of affairs echoes Roland Barthes' (1994) concept of the death of the author and the birth of the reader, as well as Janet Staiger's description of authorship as a 'fantasy construction of a [...] reader's fictional representations' (2003:45). Timothy Corrigan qualifies 'auteurism as a way of viewing and receiving movies, rather than as a mode of production' (1990:44) and that, specifically in terms of promotional strategies, 'auteurist marketing of movies [...] through the reverberations of directorial names across titles [...guarantees] a relationship between audience and movie [through] a kind of brand-name vision whose contextual meanings are already determined' (1990:44). This thesis focuses on the 'brand-name' of three different interpretations of authorship: the 'auteur-star' (Corrigan, 1991:48), the 'author function' (Foucault, 1984:107) and Disney as 'metonym' (Wells, 2002a:104).

Historically, the obvious candidate for identifying authorship would be the film's director(s) as it is they that have traditionally wielded the most power during the production process. This is the route through which the *Cahiers du cinéma* group popularised the *auteur* polemic (Hayward, 2000:19-22) in terms of live-action film. Mark Langer notes that this traditional view of authorship has carried over from live-action analysis to studies of animation texts, writing in 1997 that '[u]ntil recent years,

there has been a tradition of analysing animated cartoons by attributing their characteristic features to the particular achievements of an individual, paralleling *auteur* methodology in the study of live action film.’ (1997:148) Yet more recent animation academics are now divided on the subject: Hu argues that a single entity cannot be unproblematically credited with the success of an animated text due to the nature of ‘large-scale studio production work that requires more than 100 people’ (2010:112) and Wasko writes that ‘animation [...] is a collective art form’ (2001:120), whereas, in contrast, Wells contends that ‘animation may be viewed as the most auteurist of film practices’ (2002b:73), going on to suggest that animation ‘insists upon the cohesive intervention of an authorial presence’ (2002b:73).

Roland Barthes writes that a ‘text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture’ (1994:168), which implies that authorship is not fixed upon any single site and is instead fragmented and multifaceted. Assuming one acknowledges that multiple authors – both auteur-stars and author function entities – can exist for a given text, one encounters the issue of gainfully separating the brand-names in question. As can be expected, there will be a degree of overlap between what one might attribute to one particular author. For example, when separating the brand-names of Hayao Miyazaki and Studio Ghibli, one encounters a series of queries relating to precisely where one makes such a division. In regard to the earlier films from Hayao Miyazaki and Isao Takahata prior to the formation of the studio, Colin Odell and Michelle Le Blanc comment that

an increasing number of these works are now released under the Ghibli banner, most notably Miyazaki's *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind*, Takahata's *Gōshu the Cellist* [/ *Sero hiki no Gōshu* (Isao Takahata, 1982)...] and the pair's breezy *Panda Kopanda* films [... *Panda! Go Panda!* / *Panda Kopanda* (Isao Takahata, 1972, short) and *Panda! Go Panda! Rainy Day Circus* / *Panda kopanda amefuri sākasu no maki* (Isao Takahata, 1973, short)], none of which are technically Ghibli films. Further confusion has been created by the addition of the Studio Ghibli logo, a profile of their mascot Totoro, to many of the films acquired later by the studio. (2009:15)

Numerous other questions could arise in addition to those alluded to above: what of the earlier works from Hayao Miyazaki, beginning with his work as an inbetween artist on the television series *Wolf Boy Ken* / *Okami shōnen Ken* (1963 – 1965)? Are we to include the less universally available short films directed by Hayao Miyazaki like *Mei and the Kitten Bus* / *Mei to Koneko basu* (Hayao Miyazaki, 2002, short) or *Mr. Dough and the Egg Princess* / *Pan-dane to Tamago-hime* (Hayao Miyazaki, 2010, short)? What of the music videos such as 'On Your Mark' directed by Hayao Miyazaki and others that Studio Ghibli have produced over the years (Madden, 2015:1)? How should we categorise Studio Ghibli films directed by others, such as *The Secret World of Arrietty* / *Kari-gurashi no Arietti* (Hiromasa Yonebayashi, 2010) and *Grave of the Fireflies* / *Hotaru no haka* (Isao Takahata, 1988)? In discussing the Miyazaki brand-name, should we distinguish between the canon of Hayao Miyazaki and the films directed by his son, Gorō Miyazaki, like *Tales from Earthsea* / *Gedo senki* (Gorō Miyazaki, 2006)? For the

sake of both clarity and concision of this academic study, when discussing the Hayao Miyazaki brand-name, I have continued to focus solely on his most recent three feature length films – *Howl*, *Ponyo* and *Wind* – of the eleven total feature length films directed by Hayao Miyazaki himself<sup>1</sup>, whilst simultaneously remaining conscious of the complicating factors listed above.

Further issues regarding the definition of brand-names abound when one is discussing the author functions of the studios themselves. Denison comments on the multiplicity of meanings here, writing that ‘it would be more proper [...] to refer to the *Studios Ghibli*’ (2015:123, emphasis in original) as a whole host of affiliated companies and subsidiary companies which exist under a single umbrella (2015:123-4). One might also make the point that there exists *multiple Hayao Miyazakis* with conflicting agendas, just as in Denison’s above identification of several Studios Ghibli. This echoes both David Bordwell’s observation of the ‘author-as-narrator’ Rainer Werner Fassbinder’s fragmented nature (1985:211), as well as Aaron Gerow’s argument concerning the ‘Two Takeshis’ present within the identity of Takeshi Kitano (2001:1-13). Matsuhiro Yoshimoto, writing specifically about Akira Kurosawa, goes on to note that authorship is ‘a discursive product, the critical meaning and social function of which are constantly negotiated by Kurosawa, critics, and audiences’ (2000:61). That is to say, one’s reading of a given author’s brand-name is inherently subjective and thus there is the possibility of multiple *auteur* readings existing within the same individual. I should point out here

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<sup>1</sup> Which additionally include *Lupin III: The Castle of Cagliostro / Rupan sansei: Kariosutoro no shiro* (Hayao Miyazaki, 1979), *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind*, *Laputa: Castle in the Sky*, *My Neighbour Totoro*, *Kiki's Delivery Service*, *Porco Rosso*, *Princess Mononoke* and *Spirited Away*.

that this study shall continue to use the singular Studio Ghibli and Hayao Miyazaki as opposed to Studios Ghibli or Hayao Miyazakis for the sake of simplicity, but it is worth acknowledging, even in passing, the multi-faceted nature of authorship signification. When discussing the Studio Ghibli brand-name it should be understood that I am incorporating every facet of the entire franchise, including merchandise and the Studio Ghibli Museum. It should be noted that the above approach applies to Disney as well and that, in order to streamline this analysis, I shall refer to a singular Disney brand-name as incorporating all known subsidiaries and other associations, whilst acknowledging the various complexities involved at an industrial level.

I am also aware that a number of the issues discussed in terms of authorship could be attributed to multiple authors. For example, the discussion of the Studio Ghibli Museum could be understood to relate to the brand-names of both Hayao Miyazaki and Studio Ghibli. In such cases I will debate the topic under whichever brand-name I deem to be most suitable with the understanding that, although the subject may be applicable to multiple brand-names, a repetitive analysis would hinder any effort to remain as concise as possible. Furthermore, this analysis is not intended to be an exhaustive examination of all of the authorial brand-names involved in the Disneyfication of Ghibli products. One might make a further study of various Ghibli brand-names such as Toshio Suzuki (see Denison, 2015:117-132), Isao Takahata, Gorō Miyazaki and Joe Hisaishi. However, because these brand-names feature only passingly in the Disneyfied paratextual material as presented in 'Chapter Five – Promotion: The Brand-Names of Ghibli and Disney', this thesis will not examine these auteur-stars

directly. Additionally, one might describe several Disney figures like Pete Docter, Rick Dempsey, Kathleen Kennedy and Geoffrey Wexler as auteur-stars complicit in the process of Disneyfication, as they appear frequently within the behind-the-scenes paratextual materials as detailed in 'Chapter Three – Stardom: Re-Dubbing and Star-Images'. Yet, as this thesis is primarily interested in these brand-names in term of their influence in the re-casting of star-images, this thesis turns to focus on the John Lasseter brand-name because it is associated with not just films like *Howl*, *Wind* and *Ponyo* on a textual level, but also the entirety of the paratextual Ghibli branded-subgenre outside of the film canon, particularly in regards to the Studio Ghibli Museum. In short, this thesis aims instead to stimulate discussion in this sub-field of Ghibli/Disney author-images to clear the path for future analyses to follow the framework laid out herein.

This thesis examines authorship in three contexts. Firstly, it deconstructs Hayao Miyazaki and John Lasseter in terms of the brand-name of the *auteur*, or as Thomas LaMarre describes it, 'an artist or author effect' (2009:87, emphasis in original). Writing specifically about Hayao Miyazaki, LaMarre describes the director as 'an auteur in the sense that he puts his stamp on every aspect of production (writing, directing, animating) [...] there really is a Miyazaki style, a Miyazaki look and feel and treatment, and we recognize his films as Miyazaki films, we see in them his vision' (2009:87). The language LaMarre uses is focused on aesthetic concerns, indicating that Miyazaki's *auteurial* impact is centred upon the visuality of his creations. Yet this emphasis overlooks the power of his commodified brand-name in paratextual promotional

campaigns. Indeed, such is the awareness and visibility of both Miyazaki's and Lasseter's brand-name, they can be described as an 'auteur-star' (Corrigan, 1990:48); that is, an auteur 'situated along an extratextual path, in which [... they are] meaningful primarily as a promotion' (1991:48-9). That is to say, that the brand-name of Hayao Miyazaki, when viewed outside of aesthetic, textual concerns, acts most critically as a method of connecting multiple texts together through paratextual means. The analysis for this thesis aims to deconstruct how the paratextuality of Miyazaki's and Lasseter's auteur-star brand-names are deployed throughout various paratextual material and thus how they are utilised within the broader process of Disneyfying the Ghibli text.

Secondly, this thesis discusses Studio Ghibli as a brand-name in and of itself, recalling Michel Foucault's description of an 'author function' (1984:107). Jerome Christensen describes the author function as 'a person who is not actual but who nonetheless qualifies for the status of the intending author: the corporate studio itself' (2012:13). In the context of our case study of Studio Ghibli, LaMarre notes, 'Ghibli films [...] imply a worldview that contributes to the constitution of a Ghibli world' (2009:87). Thus, an animation studio such as Ghibli may *function* as an authorial brand-name by espousing a worldview, insofar that it is meaningful primarily in terms of promotion (Corrigan, 1991:49). That is to say, this thesis shall not examine the feasibility of how an entire animation studio might actively co-author an animated film, but rather to examine how Studio Ghibli functions as a brand-name throughout various paratextual material. Moving forward with this understanding, it is the position of this thesis that, in

addition to the brand-name vision of Hayao Miyazaki and John Lasseter, the author function of Ghibli espouses a textual worldview that has been successfully deployed as a brand-name in promotional paratexts.

Thirdly and finally, this thesis aims to demonstrate that the auteur-stars of Hayao Miyazaki and John Lasseter, as well as the author function of Studio Ghibli, are in turn acted upon by the set of processes which comprise Disneyfication. LaMarre defines '[t]he dynamics of the Miyazaki auteur effect and the Ghibli-brand world' (2009:87) as a hierarchy of authorship where the director's influence is subservient to the studio. He goes on to write that 'the Miyazaki effect—Miyazaki as *auteur*—emerges within a theater of operations known as Studio Ghibli' (2009:87). This thesis postulates that a similar pattern occurs through the Disneyfication of Ghibli and that the brand-names of Hayao Miyazaki, John Lasseter and Studio Ghibli emerge and are utilised for specific purposes within the theatre of operations known as Disneyfication. Moreover, it is my argument that this process occurs through the facilitating, bridging brand-name of John Lasseter by using Walt Disney as a metonym (2002a:104) for describing the broader modes of delivery and set of processes known as Disneyfication.

The intention of this thesis is to determine precisely how certain individual authorial brand-names are deployed in various paratextual materials and how these varied uses work in favour of the broader process of Disneyfication. Firstly, I address the brand-names of auteur-stars, namely Hayao Miyazaki and John Lasseter. Secondly, I postulate that Studio Ghibli acts as an author function brand-name, which implies a particular

worldview. Finally, I analyse how these three brand-names interact within the ‘theater of operations’ (LaMarre, 2009:87) of the Disneyfication systemscape. I posit that Studio Ghibli products operate within ‘a “billboard effect” of multiple messages and conflicting authorities’ (Coombe, 1998:38) characterised by the layered brand (Denison, 2015:120) of Hayao Miyazaki, Studio Ghibli, John Lasseter and Disney. When combined in conjunction with the various star-images used to sell a given film, this forms a film’s ‘brandscape’ (O’Reilly and Kerrigan, 2013) – or, as Denison discusses more specifically in the context of Ghibli, a ‘brand network’ (Denison, 2015:118) – which is then utilised extensively in the marketing and promotion of a Disneyfied Ghibli film.

### **PARATEXTUALITY AND CAMPAIGN ANALYSIS**

Throughout this introduction I have been referring to paratextuality, a concept I have borrowed from Jonathan Gray’s use of the term (2010). By ‘paratext’, I am referring to promotional content, including ‘posters, videogames, podcasts, reviews, or merchandise’ (2010:6), but also, in the context of this thesis, websites, behind-the-scenes DVD special features and online interviews. Gray goes on to define a paratext as ‘not simply add-ons, spinoffs, and also-rans: they create texts, they manage them, and they fill them with many of the meanings that we associate with them’ (2010:6). The meanings associated in this context are, at first glance, the ‘brand networks’ (Denison, 2015:118) comprised of ‘star-images’ (Dyer, 1986:3) and authorial ‘brand-names’ (Corrigan, 1991:103) associated with each campaign, but on a broader level

these meanings also incorporate the various symptoms of Disneyfication, including the application of themed narrative images, a hyper-realist aesthetic, evidence of performative labour and examples of corporate synergy. In each paratext I shall be discussing how these meanings of Disneyfication are propagated, but also how these inferences manage the wider narrative image of the filmic text itself. It should be noted here that some of the source materials prefer to use the phraseology 'extratextual' (Corrigan, 1990:48-9; Geraghty, 2000:185; Pallant, 2011:5; Kernan, 2004:3) rather than 'paratextual'. This thesis understands these concepts to pertain to similar materials – that is, those related ephemera outside of the text itself – but continues to refer to paratextuality because, whilst the use of extratext implies an additional accoutrement to the text itself, Gray's concept of the paratext implies *management* of the text. In short, paratexts manage texts in a manner not dissimilar to how meta-data manages data. This distinction behoves this thesis' discussion of Disneyfied themed narratives present in the paratexts as more than noteworthy accessories.

It is my argument that paratextual analysis is the most germane approach when studying the Disneyfication of Ghibli texts. This is because, due to the Disney-Tokuma Deal, Disney was not permitted to alter the image track of those films re-marketed after 1996. As a result, unless one is taking an aural approach, the usual avenues for discussing Disneyfication, which often involve focusing on '*aesthetics*' (Wells, 2002a:105, emphasis in original) or 'proper (textual) analysis' (Hernández-Pérez, 2016:300) are not valid avenues of discussion. Moreover, the same nullification applies

to many examples of Disneyfication analysis which focus on narrative and representation concerns, including, but not limited to, 'feminist, psychoanalytical, [...] Marxist analysis, [...] the reinterpretation of children's literature, the character of Mickey Mouse, and the representation of women, race, and nature.' (Wasko, 2001:109) Thus the only two avenues through which Disneyfication may occur are those pertaining to aurality and promotion. Denison's 2008 study on Ghibli re-dubbed stars begins the discussion on Disneyfied aurality, but there remains a lack of research which interrogates the paratextual Disneyfication of Ghibli to any satisfactory degree of specificity. As Wasko comments, 'to understand Disney's brand of fantasy, we must understand how it is [...] marketed' (2001:28), going on to note that 'Disney's popularity or universality is not automatic, but a result of deliberate, coordinated marketing, advertising, and promotional activities.' (2001:102) The paratextual approach utilised within this thesis aims to demonstrate how Disneyfication is achieved in the re-marketing of Ghibli texts through promotional materials alone.

That is not to say no such studies of Disneyfied Ghibli paratexts exist. Eriko Ogihara-Schuck's monograph *Miyazaki's Animism Abroad: The Reception of Japanese Religious Themes by American and German Audiences* (2007) uncovers a number of examples of 'deliberate Disneyfication' (2014:88) within the Western paratexts. However, whilst providing a valuable launching pad for this thesis, the theological focus of Ogihara-Schuck's work contrasts with my own methodology, as Ogihara-Schuck is primarily concerned with showing how 'the English poster, trailer, and adaptation of *Princess Mononoke* [/ *Mononoke-hime* (Hayao Miyazaki, 1997)] together downplay animism in

the process of converting the film into a magical fantasy' (2014:77). My research builds on Ogihara-Schuck's observation and expends further effort into uncovering evidence of Disneyfication throughout the case studies presented herein.

Denison addresses the Western promotion of Ghibli texts across five key academic studies: an unpublished PhD thesis entitled 'Cultural Traffic in Japanese Anime: The Meanings of Promotion, Reception and Exhibition Circuits in *Princess Mononoke*' (2005a), an article styled 'Disembodied Stars and the Cultural Meanings of *Princess Mononoke*'s Soundscape' (2005b), a chapter dubbed 'The Language of the Blockbuster: Promotion, *Princess Mononoke* and the *Daihitto* in Japanese Film Culture' (2008a), an article titled 'Star-Spangled Ghibli: Star Voices in the American Versions of Hayao Miyazaki's Films' (2008b) and finally her monograph *Anime: A Critical Introduction* (2015). Across these five texts, Denison's analysis constructs a critical framework that addresses how various promotional materials impact a given campaign. In particular, Denison demonstrates how the audio-visual brand of an agent – be they actor or author – plays a significant role in the marketing of Studio Ghibli films, a factor which is particularly noticeable through the 'Behind the Scenes' segments included as featurettes on DVDs.

Denison does examine the Western poster, trailer and website for *Princess Mononoke* in detail (2005a:182-214). Yet my approach throughout this thesis adds three new elements to this existing foundation: a focus on the process of Disneyfication – including the star-image and brand-name deployments which suggests its influence –

and how they interact within the broader brand-subgenre of Studio Ghibli; a deployment of new techniques and frameworks including campaign analysis and audio-visual synchronous (para)textual analysis; and a deeper inspection of the paratextual presence of certain Hollywood stars, as opposed to their vocal delivery, as well as their deployment and significance *within* the promotional paratexts themselves, such as within behind-the-scenes interviews. Building from Denison's foundation, the following study examines Ghibli promotional strategies within the context of Disneyfication, rather than comparing the Japanese release of a given Ghibli film to 'that of the many films it shared market space with on its release' (Denison, 2008a:106).

In previous years, there has been an increasing interest in studying film marketing, including, but not limited to, Heath (1976), Haralovich and Klapat (1982), Klinger (1991) and Staiger (1990). In the context of re-marketing Japanese films in the West, more specific studies have been carried out (McRoy, 2005; Stringer, 2007), including an examination of the re-branding of violent Asian films under the 'Tartan Asia Extreme' label (Dew, 2007; Shin, 2009). These studies look specifically at the re-branding of Japanese content in the Western context and have formed a firm grounding for the work which follows in this thesis. However, many of these approaches focus solely on examining the paratext's relationship with the historic audience. Two more recent studies have been particularly beneficial to my research: Lisa Kernan and Johnston.

Kernan's *Coming Attractions: Reading American Movie Trailers* utilises Aristotle's concept of the 'enthymeme' and thereby insists that one can discuss trailers in terms of a producer's assumed intent, noting that 'one can pinpoint [para]textual evidence of trailer producers' assumptions about their audience(s)' (2004:5). She goes on to identify that paratexts can emphasise 'three principal textual features of films: genres, stories and stars' (2004:5), an approach which Johnston later describes as creating the taxonomy of 'star-, genre- or narrative-based types.' (2009:4) This technique of paratextual analysis in terms of stardom is a key foundation for this thesis, and Kernan goes on to discuss a number of phenomena relating to Hollywood stars within paratexts, including 'the pairing of stars' (Kernan, 2004:201), a concept which Denison later addresses in a Ghibli context (2008b:140). However, whilst this thesis does briefly address genre and narrative, its secondary focus is that of authorship which remains relatively unaddressed by Kernan's work. As Johnston notes, trailers provide 'a distinctive source of historical and textual information' about auteurism (2009:1) and that, moreover, they are able to convey 'studio [...] specific messages' (2009:9). Manuel Hernández-Pérez goes further, writing that 'authorship may be more a paratextual than textual phenomenon, taking shape in several forms of commentary [...including] promotional texts (trailers, posters, interviews and reports)' (2016:300). This thesis aims to re-unify authorship and stardom in terms of paratextual analysis by discussing how both auteur brand-names and star-images are deployed to Disneyfy Ghibli paratexts.

Perhaps most crucially for the methodology devised in this thesis, Johnston has contributed greatly to the field through his volume *Coming Soon: Film Trailers and the Selling of Hollywood Technology*, which employs what he terms ‘unified analysis’ (2009:11) in which he combines textual and contextual concerns. Johnston describes how ‘unified analysis places [emphasis] on [both] scrutinizing the individual trailer text, and building a network of the unique historical influences that surrounded its production’, going on to comment that ‘[u]nified analysis begins with the unique and complex trailer text but can expand out to consider the impact of other elements’ (2009:155). This framework has laid the groundwork for my own methodology. Yet Johnston and I have differing goals; my goal is to examine the Disneyfication of multiple promotional campaigns, whereas Johnston utilizes unified analysis to consider the relationship between films and their histories. He comments that ‘unified analyses [...] have moved beyond reconstruction and have attempted to understand each text in its historically specific moment’ (2009:90).

My own research, as it centres on relatively recent texts, does not attempt to solely recreate historical moments, but rather attempts to map how a marketing campaign can continue to have a lasting impact *beyond* the moment of theatrical release. That is to say, my approach, which I term ‘campaign analysis’, looks across marketing paratexts, not only for how they may have affected past demographics, but also for how these same paratexts have *ongoing* effects. It is the intention of this thesis to update Kernan’s and Johnston’s perspectives on modern paratextual deployment online. As Kernan notes, trailers were originally ‘created for the purpose of projecting

in theatres to promote a film's theatrical release.' (2004:1) and as such were seen as a 'pre- or post-filmic event' (Johnston, 2009:5). Whilst this may have been the case in some of the historical periods discussed in their work, both academics recognise that the trailer has shifted from theatres to home media and online sources (Kernan, 2004:207; Johnston, 2009:23) and that it is incorrect to limit a trailer to its 'theatrical shelf life' (Johnston, 2009:23). Writing slightly more recently and covering trailers produced as late as 2005 (2009:24), Johnston discusses how trailers spread to videophones (2009:23), iPods (2009:147) and computers with the latest Quicktime player (2009:126). Since 2005 however, technology has progressed even further and increasingly, as Johnston predicted, 'the Internet has become an unofficial archive, with fans and studios uploading [...] previews to [...] YouTube.' (2009:161). Following on from Johnston's grounding, it is the argument of this thesis that the 'advent of [...] Youtube [...] has revolutionized how fans access a variety of trailer texts' (2009:150-8). It is precisely because of this revolution that campaign analysis is able to take into account all available paratexts and discuss them, not only in terms of a historically specific moment, but also in terms of how they may affect audiences today.

Furthermore, utilising the campaign analysis approach, this thesis broadens the scope of study beyond the trailer to include additional paratexts. This allows a more complete picture of the interconnected campaign as a whole, rather than a single aspect of it. Johnston admits that this intertwined nature of the paratextual campaign notes that 'the trailer establishes a visual and generic identity echoed in later posters, TV spots, and lobby cards.' (2009:154) It is my argument that by using similar analytical

techniques which have previously been applied to the trailer only (Johnston, 2009; Kernan, 2004) and by then applying them not only to the trailer, but to the paratexts which echo this identity, campaign analysis allows one to uncover evidence of narrative theming and other symptoms of Disneyfication, which may only be evident when considering the campaign as a whole.

The campaign analysis methodology featured in this thesis follows a specific chronology, which is, initially, to examine any paratextual 'behind-the-scenes features' (Johnston, 2009:141) relating to specific star-images and author brand-names in 'Chapter Three – Stardom: Re-Dubbing and Star-Images' and 'Chapter Four – Authorship: Auteur-Stars and Author Functions', before leading in to a more detailed analysis of film posters, theatrical trailers and other paratextual sources in 'Chapter Five – Promotion: Disneyfying the Paratext'. Justin Wyatt (1994) points out that a film poster is a particularly viable medium for promotional examination because of its simplicity and self-contained nature as a medium and thus, by first analysing the poster and then the trailer, paratextual analysis is able to track how the narrative image ideas contained within the poster are elaborated upon in moving-image marketing. There are additional benefits to focusing particularly upon posters and trailers. Because all major film productions have these paratexts, I am better able to compare paratexts across linguistic and cultural contexts as well as draw contrasts across multiple paratextual campaigns. Moreover, this research is also able to take into account both the audiences of a decade ago, for whom both posters and trailers were visible in cinema theatres, and also the modern-day consumer, who has access to

them through various Internet services. In addition to poster and trailer analysis, I shall be examining content present on DVD special features, online interviews with stars and producers – the majority of which are uploaded by the Walt Disney Studios Youtube channel itself – as well as the archived and no longer operational official websites. These paratexts would not only be influential and available to past audiences, but will continue to have an impact on consumers viewing Ghibli paratexts for the first time today. In other words my campaign analysis methodology is inherently transhistoric in that it allows consideration of materials produced at the time of the campaign itself as well as the ongoing ‘textual poaching’ (Jenkins, 1992) and re-appropriation of these resources through an ever increasing array of new media technologies, each occurring within individualised moments of (para-)textual consumption and creation.

There is not sufficient space in this thesis to efficiently cover every single piece of promotional paraphernalia from even a single Ghibli film. Every Ghibli release is accompanied by an enormous extent of paratextual ephemera including, but not limited to: film posters, theatrical trailers, official websites, television spots, DVD covers, billboards, radio commercials, newspaper advertisements, magazine reviews, internet pop-ups, art books, clothing, soft toys, household items and innumerable miscellaneous items of merchandise. It is not within the scope of this study to cover every aspect of this incredibly vast spectrum and thus, in the interests of finding a balance between detail and concision, this thesis focuses much of its attention upon the first two points – film posters and theatrical trailers – although a number of other

paratexts are also analysed in passing. In total, twelve paratextual items are examined in 'Chapter Five – Promotion: Disneyfying the Paratext': three Japanese film posters, three English language film posters, three Japanese theatrical trailers and three English language theatrical trailers. The central concern of the examination is the frequency with which marketing devices are used, how prominent they are and *why* they are deployed in that particular fashion. In addition, I draw attention to the application of a themed narrative image portrayed by each paratext and how 'the "must see" narrative image of the film [...] reproduced in posters and trailers' (Redmond 2009:139). Thus, this thesis additionally demonstrates how the application of an artificial themed narrative works to divide the spheres of production and consumption (Warren, 1994:92).

At this point I should mention that in a number of cases I have been presented with a choice of content to analyse; in some, but not all, cases there have been multiple versions of posters and trailers within a given linguistic context. In such cases, I have elected to focus solely on the most prevalent examples of each paratextual item. For example, it is a relatively common practice in Japan to produce two film one-sheet posters prior to a theatrical release. I have striven to select the poster most commonly deployed in the wider media and promotional events. In contrast, for the purposes of the UK release, British trailers were produced for both *Ponyo* and *Wind*. However, because these UK trailers are, for the most part, re-edited versions of their American counterparts and because it is the American trailers that appear as special features within both the American and British DVD releases, I have chosen to ignore the UK

trailers entirely and concentrate on the theatrical trailers produced for the American market. In summary then, what follows is not to be understood as a *complete* account of the promotional materials for *Howl*, *Ponyo* and *Wind*. Instead, this thesis serves as a starting point for such analysis with the understanding that there exists plenty of scope for a future examination of a wider range of Ghibli paratextual ephemera.

Using campaign analysis, my approach has been to compare the original Japanese and American campaigns to ascertain how the campaigns as a whole attempted to accomplish different goals. That is to say that the Japanese campaign, targeted entirely at the domestic audience, is concerned with promoting a canon of films which are vastly successful within the confines of Japan (see 'Chapter Two – Distribution: The Fantasyscape and the Systemscape'). Yet the American campaign has the much more complex task of Disneyfying the anime medium-genre on a case-by-case basis so that it appeals to the widest possible Anglophonic Disney family audience. The three campaigns examined here are also managed, or contributed to, by various different producers. In Japan, Denison notes that the marketing for Ghibli films is led by Toshio Suzuki amidst other collaborators (2015:129-30) and in America, well-known industrial figures like John Lasseter and Kathleen Kennedy all play their part in contributing to the Disney campaigns. However, it is not the intention of this thesis to examine contributions to campaigns on an individual scale, but rather to demonstrate that, in the Disneyfied version of Ghibli paratexts, there is a broad trend one can trace across multiple campaigns: that the processes of Disneyfication have evolved from utilising transferred, anticipatory glocalization methods, as evidenced in the earlier paratextual

campaigns of the Disney-Tokuma period (Carter, 2018a, Carter, 2018b) and towards a subtler, more structured and responsive approach.

### **ISOLATING A CASE STUDY**

Before moving on, it is worth taking the time to explicate my limited scope in case studies. This thesis draws solely upon the paratextual campaigns for *Howl*, *Ponyo* and *Wind* rather than any competing subset of Studio Ghibli films. I have made five crucial divisions in Ghibli's *oeuvre*, which has left me with just these three texts. Firstly, I made the decision to isolate only those feature length films directed by Hayao Miyazaki, leaving analysis of other notable Ghibli directors such as Isao Takahata, Gorō Miyazaki, Hiromasa Yonebayashi and others for possible future analysis. Hayao Miyazaki, as a brand-name, has a particularly strong association with the Studio Ghibli brand network – not unlike the connection between John Lasseter and Pixar, which we will return to later in this thesis – and, moreover, it is his brand-name that appears frequently in many of the promotional videos, films and other ephemera associated with the studio.

Secondly, as this thesis deals with Disneyfication, one should naturally focus on those films produced under the Disney-Tokuma Deal, which has only been actively relevant for a portion of Studio Ghibli's history. The deal itself was crystallized immediately prior to the release of *Princess Mononoke* two decades ago, although the pace of film production has slowed over time. This drought in content is presumably due to a number of factors, including the increasing success of the studio and thus a more

intense need to devote resources to promotion and paratextuality, Hayao Miyazaki's involvement in the Studio Ghibli Museum and other such side projects, the director's advancing age, his continual promise of retirement and the time intensive nature of producing high quality animation utilising both hand-drawn cels and CGI technologies. In short, Hayao Miyazaki has only directed five feature length films in this Disney-Tokuma Deal period to date: *Princess Mononoke*, *Spirited Away* / *Sen to Chihiro no kamikakushi* (Hayao Miyazaki, 2001), *Howl*, *Ponyo* and *Wind*.

Thirdly, the period between 2004 and 2005, around the time of *Howl's* release, marked a tumultuous time for the Disney Company. In March 2004, as Pallant notes, '[a]lthough [Michael] Eisner remained as Disney's CEO, he was stripped of his position as chairman; the following year, after more boardroom pressure, Eisner agreed to leave a year earlier than his contract stipulated.' (2011:129) Pallant goes on to comment that 'Robert A. Iger [...] was appointed as Disney CEO on 1 October 2005' (2011:130). This leadership transition clearly demarcates a shift in overall approach to how Disney as a company is run and thus how Disneyfication will be perceived in future paratexts. Indeed, Pallant goes as far as to classify them as separate eras, denoting the period between 1999 and 2004 as the 'Neo-Disney period' (2011:111) and 2004 onwards as 'Digital Disney' (2011:126-42).

Fourthly, they act as a direct comparison to Denison's study concerning stardom (2008b), wherein she selected three films from Hayao Miyazaki which had recently, at the time of her writing, been released on DVD: *Kiki's Delivery Service*, *Laputa: Castle in*

*the Sky* and *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind*. In contrast, I have opted to examine what ostensibly amounts to, at the time of my writing, the most recent three cinematic releases from Hayao Miyazaki.

Fifthly and finally, building on my previous writings on this topic (Carter, 2018a; Carter, 2018b), the campaigns for both *Princess Mononoke* and *Spirited Away* were in many ways a testing of the water for the Disney localizers, an attempt to find an acceptable approach upon which to build future paratextual campaigns. It took both the popular success of these two films in Western theatres *and* the Oscar attained for the latter text to lay the foundations for campaigns to come. That is to say, the paratextual campaigns for *Howl*, *Ponyo* and *Wind* are grounded in a *cumulative* campaign strategy.

In summary, it is worth clarifying that the Anglophonic contextualisation demonstrated in the forthcoming chapters is clearly not the first attempt to Westernise Miyazaki's canon. As I laid out in an earlier work (Carter, 2018b), *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* was recut and re-released as *Warriors of the Wind* by New World Pictures on VHS in 1985 and *Tonari no Totoro / My Neighbor Totoro* (Hayao Miyazaki, 1988) received a delayed re-release through Fox Video in 1993. Nor are these three films the first to be Disneyfied, as my previous writings on *Princess Mononoke* and *Spirited Away* attest. However, it is the opinion of this thesis that this triptych does occur during a period wherein a noticeable shift occurs in Disney's approach to re-marketing Ghibli films.

## CHAPTER OUTLINE

As alluded to throughout this introductory chapter, uniting the West's consumption of Studio Ghibli under a single approach is a problematic exercise. If we were to turn to various other academics, the range of methodologies they employ is disconcertingly vast. Wells frames the debate as the 'cartoon' versus the 'manga film' (1998:3), Koichi Iwabuchi treats anime distribution as the 'Americanization of Japanization' (2002:38) and Denison analyses the relationship(s) between Studio Ghibli and, variously, stardom (2008b), authorship (2015) and promotion (2007). It is the intention of this thesis to unify 'the shifting global chaos of anime production, translation, dissemination and consumption' (Denison, 2015:2) under the single banner of Disneyfication.

Wells writes about the hegemony of the American 'cartoon' (1998:4) and how 'Disney effectively branded 'animation'. The art of the form was explained by Disney and through Disney.' (2002a:53) Before examining Studio Ghibli specifically, this thesis first must briefly address the imbalanced relationship between the cartoon and anime.

'Chapter One – Animation: From Cartoons to Anime' elucidates how, well before Hayao Miyazaki began to draw, the first wave of Disneyfication was already underway, shaping the future of global animation.

Iwabuchi comments that 'the international spread of *mukokuseki* popular culture from Japan simultaneously articulates the universal appeal of Japanese cultural products

and the disappearance of any perceptible “Japaneseness” (2002:33). His point here is that the *mukokuseki* – problematically translated as ‘culturally odourless’ (2002:27) or more literally translated as ‘culturally stateless’ – nature of Japanese cultural products is not indicative of Japan, but rather, as Iwabuchi puts it, ‘an animated, race-less and culture-less, virtual version of “Japan”’ (2002:33). Put another way, anime products are entering the West as simplified, Disneyfied versions of the original. In ‘Chapter Two – Distribution: The Fantasyscape and the Systemscape’, I map the channels of distribution and pinpoint the moment in which the original, Japanese Ghibli product becomes Disneyfied before being sold, first to American audiences and then consumers in the rest of the Anglophone world, such as the UK. Following this, I then briefly re-map the global flows as influenced by alternative channels of distribution, demonstrating that the influence of Disneyfication cannot be undone and that such a re-branding contaminates the remainder of the text’s global distribution.

In regards to anime and stardom, Denison has pointed out several key strategies employed by Disney in relation to the re-dubbing of Ghibli texts, noting that ‘American star voices have changed the meanings of Miyazaki’s films, making them no longer Japanese but star-spangled Japanese-American co-productions’ (2008b:144). In ‘Chapter Three – Stardom: Re-Dubbing and Star-Images’, I begin this re-mapping process by selecting six relevant star-images, such as that of Christian Bale, and tracking their various performances, both in live-action cinema and as voice actors, in order to build up a picture of the intertextual digressions their star-image has upon a Disneyfied Ghibli film.

As alluded to above, Denison also discusses Studio Ghibli in terms of authorship, and as a 'branded-subgenre' (2015:11). In 'Chapter Four – Authorship: Auteur-Stars and Author Functions', my research takes this concept further by comparing the interconnected relationships between the four brand-names of Hayao Miyazaki, John Lasseter, Ghibli and Disney and the manner in which they provide a cohesive 'brand network' (Denison, 2015:118) to Western consumers of the Ghibli-Disney co-productions.

Pulling these two threads together, it is at this point in my academic trajectory that I bring in my own paratextual analysis of marketing material, drawing on the theories of stardom and authorship referred to above. In 'Chapter Five – Promotion: Disneyfying the Paratext', stardom and authorship are united and discussed in terms of how these concepts are implemented in the promotional paratext, as well as the manner in which the concept of the Disney family audience is manipulated and stretched to cover all categories of consumer.

To summarise, the academic arguments laid out herein concerning animation, the globalization of anime, stardom, authorship and promotion have, to varying degrees, long been staples of the Film Studies academic's arsenal when analysing animation. It is the intention of this thesis that, by focusing in on the principle of Disneyfication as it applies to all of the above theorems, this analysis can provide a cohesive overview of Western consumption of the triptych which forms the case study of this research. In the final chapter, 'Conclusion: The Disneyfication of Media', I resolve my research by tying all the above theories and conjectures together and analysing what benefits have

been gleaned from examining Disneyfication as part of a single trajectory. By extrapolating my findings beyond the level of the Disney-Ghibli (para)text, this thesis then postulates what conclusions can be drawn not just about these three campaigns, but also their impact upon both Ghibli and Disney. In short, it is my intention to create the intellectual space for a new Disneyfication model of promotion and consumption.

## **CHAPTER ONE – ANIMATION:**

### **FROM CARTOONS TO ANIME**

#### **FIRST WAVE DISNEYFICATION**

Animation as a field is easy to dismiss, perhaps because of its commonly held association that it is aimed at children. As Elizabeth Bell, Lynda Haas and Laura Sells note, there are ‘four easy pardons [...] it’s only for children, it’s only fantasy, it’s only a cartoon, and it’s just good business.’ (1995:4) Over the past two decades, there has been a proliferation of studies into the burgeoning field of animation studies, many of them centring specifically on Disney or anime. Yet there remains a gap in scholarship about how these two branches of animation intermingle, which is to say, not how two different (para)texts might compare, but how these two ideologies of animation act upon a single (para)text. This thesis aims to contextualise the differing signification systems of the Disney cartoon and the Ghibli anime so that, in later chapters, a detailed paratextual analysis might occur, revealing influences from both animation cultures.

The early period of animation history is unclear and constantly contested, but to re-summarise these foundational years is not within the scope of this thesis, as this ground has already been well trodden by previous studies (Wells, 1998:10-34; Pallant, 2011:14-31). It is, however, worth noting that differing degrees of deference are paid to the fledgling Disney studios in terms of its effect on animation’s evolution. Wells

chooses to credit Disney with the first synchronised sound animation (1998:23), *Steamboat Willie* (Ub Iwerks, 1928), the introduction of advanced colour techniques into animation (1998:23), with *Flowers and Trees* (Bill Gillett, 1932), and the first full-length animated feature (1998:23-4), *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (David Hand, 1937). Yet Pallant points out that ‘the Studio’s contribution to the development of sound and colour technology, within the medium of animation, is often overestimated and misinterpreted.’ (2011:xi) Pallant instead points to three alternative firsts: *My Old Kentucky Home* (Dave Fleischer, 1924) as the first synchronized sound animation (2011:20); *The Debut of Thomas Cat* (John Randolph Bray, 1920) as the first colour cartoon (2011:26); and *The Adventures of Prince Achmed* (Lotte Reiniger, 1926) as the first feature-length animation (2011:28).

Whether any of these films were truly the firsts in their field is beside the point; regardless of the true historical facts, one can observe that Disney is often given credit for the early developments within animation. Lynda Haas writes that ‘[t]he precise coordination of sound and image in animation is still called “Mickey Mousing.”’ (1995:84n3) The reasoning behind this praise is that, despite not being the creators of innovation, Disney remains the primary force of popularising and normalising it. However, Disney did make great strides in developing existing technologies – such as improvements made to the multiplane camera (Pallant, 2011:28) – and the signing of lucrative deals with other companies in the field – such as securing exclusive rights to deploy Technicolor technology (2011:27) – and such business acumen allowed the studio ‘to become the industry’s principal studio.’ (2011:27). If there is one original

aspect which Disney introduced to animation it is the large scale merchandising of ephemera surrounding the release of its films. Pallant notes that *Snow White* was ‘the first film to have an accompanying album’ (2011:22) and Wasko goes on to add that

[a]s early as 1936, the company granted over 70 licences to various companies to produce a wide range of items, including clothing, food, toys, books, phonograph records, and sheet music. Comic books, painting and coloring books, and picture books were sold before the film was released. Also featured were Snow White radios produced by Emerson, Snow White-print corsets, Snow White sliced bread, and Snow White treasure chests for all the Snow White toys. (2001:14)

This large scale merchandising reflects both Bryman’s observation of merchandising and Wasko’s definition of synergy as symptoms of Disneyfication and the association remains strong today: Philip Kelly Denslow writes that ‘[i]n Hollywood, marketing or thinking about a film as animation automatically throws it into the sphere of influence of the Walt Disney Company’ (1997:2). Due to Disney’s dominance in ‘essentially put[ting] animation on the map’ (Wells, 1998:3) as alluded to in ‘Introduction: Studio Ghibli and Disneyfication’, a number of animation cultures took up those practices proven to be successful by Disney. That is to say, Disney is responsible for conceptualising a rigid form of aesthetic animating principles and spreading these hyper-realist practices to other animation cultures, or as Pallant describes it, Disney actively encouraged ‘the indoctrinization of the twelve principles of animation’

(2011:19). Wells argues that, in popularising the ‘terms which the broad spectrum of audiences recognise *as* animation’ (Wells, 1998:225, emphasis in original), the process of popularisation and Disneyfication ‘essentially defined the parameters of the full-length animated feature and, consequently, the requirement to move beyond the gag-oriented structures of the cartoon short.’ (1998:225) Crucially, this assumption of Disney dominance continues to the present day and animators and studios are often measured against their adherence to the style and principles which the animation giant propagates. (Wells, 2002a:49) It is my postulation that this referential point amounts to what I term ‘first wave Disneyfication’; that is to say, certain aspects of Disneyfication – the production of colourised, sound-synchronised, hyper-realist feature length films, alongside merchandising ephemera – are so deeply entrenched within global animation cultures that they are practically ubiquitous. For the purposes of this study, it is important to differentiate between this first wave and later, secondary waves of Disneyfication which occur on a case-by-case basis. In other words, this thesis recognises that, on an aesthetic level, Miyazaki’s anime films can arguably be read as being influenced by first wave Disneyfication on the level of the text, but in addition, providing the primary focal point for this thesis, the promotional English language campaigns for Ghibli’s films can be described as subject to a second wave of Disneyfication on the level of the paratext.

Following this first wave of Disneyfication, the ‘cartoonal’ (Wells, 2002a:113) culture which developed in the West more or less continues the principles laid out above regarding first wave Disneyfication, alongside influences from comic strips (1998:12)

and parallels made to the world of art (White, 1998:38). This cartoon form can be thought of as representing 'Orthodox animation in the Disney style' (Wells, 2002a:113). Yet it is not the only style of animation prevalent in the world. Wells writes that 'the subject of my discussion is *animation*, and not merely the *cartoon*, which is only one of the forms' (1998:6, emphasis in original).

Another of the forms which Wells describes is the 'Japanese manga film' (1998:3), which one might refer to more commonly today as 'anime'. It should be noted at this point that Miyazaki himself has claimed his films are 'manga films not anime' (LaMarre, 2009:60), but this thesis will discuss Japanese animations in terms of anime, understanding the manga film to be a descriptor of a particular kind of anime film, predicated by ideological value judgments. Anime is, of course, not the only animation culture one might select, but due to its popularity worldwide it demands a high level of critical attention. Wells writes that 'the amount of cheaply produced, highly industrialised cel animation made in the USA and Japan has colonised television schedules, and perhaps, more importantly, the imaginations of viewers.' (1998:35) Pallant goes on to write that 'in Eastern markets, such as Japan, animation has a strong cultural identity, with artistic traditions that have developed beyond the influence of Disney animation.' (2011:114) Thus, following first wave Disneyfication, the anime culture of Japan has cultivated its own form and garnered a sizeable global audience.

Wells (1998:8) writes that, despite a number of academics attempting to classify the cartoon as 'art' (Adamson, 1975; Cabarga, 1988; Crafton, 1993; Holliss and Sibley,

1988), the cartoon is seen as 'Orthodox Animation', whereas other work is categorised as either 'Developmental Animation' or 'Experimental Animation' (Wells, 1998:8).

Whilst admitting that there will be some overlap in these simplistic definitions (1998:8), Wells postulates that all animation cultures can be classified within this taxonomy. He goes on to explain their individual properties, relating that

if orthodox animation attempts to retain some sense of 'the real', experimental animation refutes and invalidates it, insisting upon the medium's capacity to create different and unique image systems with their own inherent form and meaning. Developmental animations sits between the two polarities and, perhaps, represents a high proportion of the work done in the animated field in the sense that it works with the hyper-realist space but subverts it through the use of different techniques, different modes of story-telling and, most significantly, different approaches to issues and themes. [...Developmental animation is always] attempting to reclaim the language of film (live-action and animation) which is predominantly gendered as masculine by the prominence of male characters, modes of action and adventure, and the relegation of women to subordinate roles and narrative functions. (1998:51-2)

Using this definition, one might describe anime and, perhaps more specifically, Studio Ghibli's films as a form of developmental animation, particularly when taking into account Miyazaki's tendency towards strong female characters (Napier, 2005). Moving forward with this characterisation, one might define Ghibli's anime as positioned

between the Disneyfied cartoonal Orthodox and truly experimental animations which completely reject first wave Disneyfication and eschew narrative conventions altogether. It is in this interstitial state that anime and Ghibli exist, with a varying degree of Disneyfication applied on a case-by-case basis depending on the text in question. Before moving on to examine these cases in detail, we must first review the history of anime as a developmental animation culture and the characteristics which define its difference and opposition to Disneyfication.

### **DEFINING ANIME**

Etymologically, the term anime is either an abbreviation of '*animēshon*'<sup>2</sup> – the Japanese articulation of the English word 'animation' – or based on the French '*animé*', both of which originate from the Latin '*animatio*' meaning to impart life ('anime (n.)', N.D.:1). Writing on the definition of animation more broadly, Wells writes that

to animate, and the related words, animation, animated and animator all derive from the latin verb, *animare*, which means 'to give life to', and within the context of the animated film, this largely means the artificial creation of the illusion of movement in animate lines and forms. (1998:10)

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<sup>2</sup> アニメーション。'Animation' [my translation].

By contrast, one could compare the common Anglophone word for animated imagery, 'cartoon', originating from the Italian '*cartone*', which refers to the strong pasteboard paper upon which sketches were traditionally drawn ('cartoon (n.)', N.D.:1). The etymology of cartoon refers more towards the animation cultures' historic relationship with the comic strip, as Wells noted earlier. Yet at the base level of describing these terms as broad filmmaking practices, one might argue that, due to the effects of first wave Disneyfication, there is no distinction to be made between anime and cartoons. Both are examples of coloured moving-image animation with an accompanying soundtrack comprising of music, dialogue and sound effects; both utilise a range of techniques to produce these images, from hand-drawn to Computer Generated Imagery (CGI); and both are popular in televised and cinematic formats. Although Japanese animated imagery has been produced since 1917 (Patten, 2004:369), one can question the relationship between these early forerunners and modern anime texts, just as one might struggle in linking *Steamboat Willie* with *Toy Story 3* (Lee Unkrich, 2010). Whilst both anime and cartoons were characterised by first wave Disneyfication and founded on the principle of a "completely fake' medium by virtue of the fact that it does not use the camera to 'record' reality but artificially creates and records its own' (Wells, 1998:25), they have both developed certain aesthetic, stylistic and thematic practices as well as marketing strategies, target audiences and distribution networks. These disparate characteristics markedly distinguish not only modern anime from their cartoon counterparts, but also more recent texts from their respective animated ancestors. As Denison comments, "'anime" is [...] a comparatively new term, one that has been retroactively applied to the whole history of cel animation' (2015:5).

Annett adds to this point by reminding us that the term anime actually comprises of three animation techniques that have been deployed throughout history: 'cinematic animation', or the process of individually drawing each frame separately; 'cel-style', the flat style most commonly associated with anime wherein one separates the frame's depth of field into a handful of layers so that one can keep the background relatively constant and focus on animating the foreground; and CGI 'Flash anime', wherein the image is at least partially generated using a variety of computer programs and digital editing techniques (2014:11-13). All three of these styles emanate from distinct eras within the history of anime and collectively they represent a significant evolution in the phenomenon, as Denison notes when she describes the shift from cel-style to Flash anime as a 'watershed change' (2015:9). Miyazaki has been noted to favour the cel-style of animation, although this preference appears to be changing now, considering rumours that his upcoming film *Boro the Caterpillar* (N.D.) will be in the 3-D Flash anime style (Carroll, 2016). Pallant notes in his discussion of Disney's technological evolution due to the influence of Pixar (2011:126-42), a similar pattern of technological evolution in the industry can be observed within the sphere of Western animation and the cartoon context, although the timeframes involved appear to follow a swifter progression. Thus, one must bear in mind that whilst both early anime and cartoons draw upon the grounding of first wave Disneyfication, they also both continue to evolve and keep pace with revolutions in the wider animation industry.

Yet the geographical boundaries between animation cultures are not as distinct as one might imagine. Certainly in terms of production, there are no clearly demarcated

geographical sites where cartoons end and anime begin. As John Lent (2001) notes, the sites of anime production are sited not only in Japan, but all across Asia. In addition, Wells notes that 'many 'American' cartoons have often been made in Japanese, Korean and Taiwanese production houses.' (2002a:4). Moreover, as Annett alludes to, the globalization of anime can be expressed in terms of 'a movement of media and bodies that takes place across multiple sites [...encompassing] more than the twin poles of Japan as the source and [...the] reception site' (2014:3). Here, Annett highlights that the process of globalization in respect to the consumption of anime is not merely the passage from East to West and in fact involves the contribution of multiple sites along the way.

This phenomenon of contracting out animation work abroad is particularly evident within Disney, as Wasko notes that '[w]hen Disney accelerated its animation production for both film and television in the mid-1980s, it turned to Japanese animation companies. In 1989, Walt Disney Animation Japan was created, where drawing, inking, coloring, and shooting were done.' (2001:91) Pallant builds on this observation, noting that whilst Disney utilised the 'domestic outsourcing opportunity [...] many other studios turned to animation houses based outside of the United States, starting a trend known in the animation industry as 'runaway production'' (2011:79), going on to note that runaway production has been implemented in animation cultures across the globe (2011:79). Pallant's point here adds the notion that runaway production includes both domestic and international outsourcing, so that even if a modern Disney production is entirely made in America, that is not necessarily the

same as it being produced in-house at the Disney Studios facilities in Hollywood.

Moreover, this phenomenon is not limited to the medium of animated film; Wasko also records that a huge amount of Disney's merchandising material is also subcontracted out overseas (2001:100-1). In summary then, one can no longer be sure of where a given anime or cartoon text originates, nor what its accompanying associations may be.

All of which is to say that there exists enormous 'cross-pollination' (Pointon, 1997:44) between the West and East in terms of ideologies, narratives and techniques. This process is ongoing, and has been accelerating in the digital age of widespread accessibility to television programming and, more recently, Internet content. As alluded to above, anime and cartoons have, over time, developed their own styles, both in terms of production and consumption. However, a quick glance through history reveals that we are not dealing with two different subdivisions of animation production; in places these branches merge, intertwine and influence one another, and yet elsewhere seem to be in constant competition. Wells records that *The Lion King* (Roger Allers and Rob Minkoff, 1994) is 'a blatant copy of Osamu Tezuka's *Kimba the White Lion* (1965)' (2002a:123), but conversely admits that '[t]he popularity of mainstream Japanese feature animé [...has influenced] many elements of contemporary American cartoons.' (2002a:4) Denison adds that 'anime is often similar to the kinds of stylised animation made by companies like Hannah-Barbera in the US.' (2017:1) That is to say, at an industrial level, Japanese and American animators have always been fascinated with the content their counterparts have produced, as well as

with influences found in alternate media such as books (including *manga*), videogames (Cavallaro, 2010) and, of course, live-action moving-images. As Susan Pointon argues

[i]t is impossible to ignore the constant cross-pollination and popular cultural borrowing that complicate and enrich anime texts. The creators for the most part are young Japanese artists in their twenties and thirties who have been exposed since birth to Western influences. (1997:44)

Napier expands on this point writing that, in terms of domestic reception, 'for most Japanese consumers of anime, their culture is no longer a purely Japanese one (and indeed, it probably hasn't been for over a century and a half)' (2005:22), adding that 'by the late 1990s it was clear that anime both influenced and was influenced by a plethora of Western cultural products' (2005:22). Here, Napier highlights the crucial point that the passage of influence is not solely the result of first wave Disneyfication, but includes reverse traffic wherein Japanese anime influences Western cartoons, as in the Italian produced television series *Winx Club* (2004 – present) or the American *The Powerpuff Girls* (1998 – present) which incorporates a 'preternaturally large' eye design (LaMarre, 2009:277) as well as the popular television series *Avatar: The Last Airbender* (2005 – 2008) and *Steven Universe* (2013 – present) which draw heavily upon a whole host of Japanese pop culture narrative traditions amongst other anime characteristics (H. Chapman, 2015:1). In the context of Disney/Pixar, perhaps the most revealing example can be found within *Big Hero 6* (Don Hall and Chris Williams, 2006), which uses the conventions and aesthetics of anime alongside more traditionally

cartoonal characteristics, creating a hybridized, cross-culturally pollinated text spanning two animation cultures.

### **ANIME AND CARTOONS AS MEDIUM-GENRES**

Clearly, the animation cultures of anime and cartoons are not so much delineated by geography as they are by particular aesthetics, narrative themes and motifs which, admittedly, have a history of mutual influence upon one another. For anime, these characters include, but are not limited to: a reduced frame rate of approximately 8 frames per second (Raffaelli, 1997:129); catchy theme songs (Drazen, 2003:14n14); 'preternaturally large' eyes; and a tendency towards *mukokuseki* character design resulting in characters that do 'not look Japanese' (Iwabuchi, 2002:28). If we were to distinguish anime and cartoon products solely by the conventions listed above, then we may be surprised by some of the results. For example, the Italian television series *Winx Club* exhibits many of the characteristics described above, most notably the aesthetic elements, whilst the Japanese series *Crayon Shin-chan / Kureyon Shinchan* (1992 – present) seems to resist these stereotypes and resembles more of a cartoonal approach.

Gilles Poitras comments that 'it is better to speak of anime as a particular medium, animation, in a particular cultural context, Japan. Then speak of Sci-Fi anime, Fantasy anime, Police anime, Historical anime, etc.' (1999:43). Here, Poitras attempts to

classify anime in terms of medium and genre, but falls short of applying a useful neologism to unite these concepts. Denison's informative monograph, *Anime: A Critical Introduction*, addresses the topic of genres and media in detail and thus this thesis shall utilise a number of her presuppositions. Firstly, in relation to the above comparison, Denison points out that anime 'is not *just* a genre any more than it is *simply* a kind of animation' (2015:2, emphasis in original). This point echoes my arguments laid out above pertaining to the multi-faceted nature of anime as a term and thus going forward whilst one can position anime as a genre, one must remain mindful that this is but one aspect of the phenomenon. Secondly, that understanding of genre is in part influenced by one's geographical and cultural position in the globalization process. She goes on to describe Japanese animation as a 'meta-genre' when considered in the domestic context of Japan and as a collection of 'subgenres' in the rest of the world (2015:24-29). Finally, in regards to media, Denison comments that

anime is more than a single mode of media production. Its styles and content are found in everything from advertisements, to webisodes and short, five-minute episode television series, through to the more standard production of "half hour" serialized episodes made for television, through to a wide range of theatrical and straight-to-video (and now DVD [and] other digital formats) film productions. (2015:1)

Here, Denison points out how the anime phenomenon cannot be pinned down to a single medium, just as it cannot be defined by a solitary genre. In fact, I would posit that the above list of media is not exhaustive and, echoing Marc Steinberg's postulation of the 'media mix' (2012:viii) of anime, one might include videogames, merchandise and other such texts as well as 'spaces, experiences and events' (Denison, 2010:546) incorporating theme parks, museums and 'specialist retail outlets' (2015:125).

As the working definition for this research, I shall re-appropriate the term 'medium-genre' (Hu, 2010:2) to describe both anime and cartoons. My deployment of the medium-genre definition is intended to signify that this thesis considers anime to owe its distinctive characteristics to both animation as a medium and to the generic characteristics which position it as being Japanese animation, thereby including influences from industry and consumption. However, anime as a style is clearly not limited solely to the animated medium and thus by framing anime as a medium-genre one can incorporate the influence of other media into the discussion. That is to say, anime as a medium-genre does not exist in isolation, as one could postulate that manga and Japanese videogames also operate as complementary medium-genres in their own right. Nevertheless, dissections of anime cannot meaningfully be separated from those factors which arise from both the nature of the animated medium and those which arise from anime storytelling traditions emanating from audience expectations and consumption contexts. My deployment of the medium-genre principle recalls LaMarre's concept of the 'animetic machine' (2009:33-8), acting as a

reminder that one is not dealing with a phenomenon that is easily definable through a single critical framework.

Narrowing the terms of engagement further, Denison describes a number 'branded-subgenres' (2015:11): that is to say, *oeuvres* united under a 'brand network' (Denison, 2015:118) which have over time developed their own set of generic conventions and audience expectations. In regards to the case study examined within this thesis, one can track how Studio Ghibli has developed a house style since its inception which has cemented into a formal aesthetic and thus, as Denison posits, 'Ghibli is becoming a genre, even while it remains a brand' (2015:132). Within the framework of this thesis, one might then define the branded-subgenre of Ghibli as a single part of the wider anime medium-genre, just as one might describe the branded-subgenre of Disney as an example of the cartoon medium-genre. In addition, I envision a methodology wherein one might divide the medium-genre of anime into not only subgenres such as a Ghibli 'branded-subgenre', but also into *submedia*, such as film, videogames or theme parks. Thus, this thesis argues that the process of Disneyfication occurs not just on the level of the medium of animation and that a host of submedia can be described as shifting from the Ghibli branded-subgenre towards the Disney branded-subgenre. Before examining how this shift between branded-subgenres occurs in practice, it is first necessary to detail how the Ghibli texts reach the West in the first place. In the following chapter, 'Chapter Two – Distribution: The Fantasyscape and the Systemscape', this thesis briefly contextualises the globalization of Ghibli products and identifies the moment in which Disneyfication occurs.

## CHAPTER TWO – DISTRIBUTION:

### THE FANTASYSCAPE AND THE SYSTEMSCAPE

#### GLOBAL FLOWS

In this chapter I pinpoint the moment wherein Ghibli texts are Disneyfied in the global distribution network by examining *Howl*, *Ponyo* and *Wind* in terms of ‘global flows’ (Appadurai, 1990:301), which is to say the trajectories betwixt geographies and distributional agencies. Arjun Appadurai popularised the concept of global flows, writing that

current global flows occur [...] *in and through the growing disjunctures between ethnoscapas, technoscapas, finanscapas, mediascapas and ideoscapas* [...] people, machinery, money, images, and ideas now follow increasingly non-isomorphic paths. (1990:301, emphasis in original)

Appadurai’s point here is that one can no longer isolate a single trajectory for the flow of cultural products around the globe, if indeed one ever could (1990:301). Appadurai notes that the disjunctures between the five ‘-scapes’ are growing, which is to say that the variances between the paths taken by cultural products are exponentially multiplying. A quarter of a century after the time of Appadurai’s writing, following a

period characterised by digitalisation and the rise of cyber-technology, one can observe that this prediction is more relevant today than ever.

Two academics have posited additions to this categorisation by adding their own '-scapes' to Appadurai's model. Susan Napier outlines the 'fantasyscape' (2005:293) characterized by a loose relationship with ontology, going on to describe 'a liminal world of entertainment, [where the viewer is] free to take part in an infinitely transforming state of fantasy' (2005:294). I would argue that if anime does offer this additional global flow, it is conditional upon the text itself remaining relatively unchanged from its anime roots. That is to say, one can imagine that watching the original Japanese version of a Studio Ghibli film which was produced before the Disney-Tokuma Deal, such as *Porco Rosso / Kurenai no buta* (Hayao Miyazaki, 1992), allowed the contemporary consumer to access this 'fantasyscape'. However, in the context of the subsequent Disneyfication of its films post 1996, I suggest that a Ghibli text becomes more associated with what Bryman describes as a 'systemscape [...that simultaneously] encourages variety and differentiation [...and] creates *structures of similarity*' (2004:168, emphasis in original). Recognising a disjuncture between the observable nature of Disneyfication and the global flow model, Bryman elaborates that

it is striking how poorly Disneyization and McDonaldization fit into Appadurai's influential delineation of different forms of '-scape' [...] we need a new conceptual term for them, which we might call *systemscape* to refer to the flow of contexts for the production and display of goods and services. [...] In the case

of Disneyization, it is a non-machine technology for the delivery of goods and services, a technology that can be transferred across the globe. (2004:161, emphasis in original)

Here, Bryman defines Disneyfication as a systemscape technology which both encourages the glocalization forces of heterogeneity *and* the globalization spread of homogenous Disneyfication. Over the past twenty five years since Appadurai's global flow conceptualisation, one can see how the options for engaging with Disney products have significantly diversified: one can now not only consume a Disney cartoon or visit one of the many Disney theme parks, but also enjoy a Ghibli anime, a Marvel television series, or a Star Wars film. Pallant points out that by acquiring such subsidiaries, the conglomerate is able to 'expand the Disney brand in areas that it considers to be underdeveloped.' (2011:144) This recalls the arguments made in 'Introduction – Studio Ghibli and Disneyfication' pertaining to subsidiary brand-names under the Disney umbrella, or as Wasko describes them, 'banners' (2001:43). In such a manner, it allows Disney and the systems of Disneyfication to access markets and content that would otherwise not fall under its family friendly purview. This diversification is evidence of Disneyfication in and of itself, but more than that there is an underlying element of connectivity which unites these Disneyfied experiences. They have each been subject to various Disneyfication principles, such as the application of a themed narrative, particularly noticeable through the plot of *Star Wars Episode VII: The Force Awakens* (J.J. Abrams, 2015) closely mirroring the original script of *Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope* (George Lucas, 1977) (Valero, 2016:1), or the gritty hyper-

realist aesthetic evident in Marvel's interconnecting Netflix series *Daredevil* (2015 – present), *Jessica Jones* (2015 – present), *Luke Cage* (2016 – present) and *Iron Fist* (2017 – present). That is to say, all of the above have been subject to the Disneyfication systemscape but they have been Disneyfied in distinctly different ways.

Ghibli (para)texts thus occupy a unique position between the fantasyscape and the systemscape. Wherein the original film produced and distributed in Japan might offer its viewers a fantasyscape free from the trappings of reality, this reading becomes questionable at the point of the film's arrival in America. After the DVD of *Howl* is released, complete with the behind-the-scenes paratext featuring a demonstration of the performative labour of Christian Bale (see 'Chapter Three – Stardom: Re-Dubbing and Star-Images'), the anime can no longer be described as a fantasyscape and is subject instead to the systemscape of Disneyfication. This chapter attempts to locate the moment when Disneyfication occurs within the context of a film's global distribution. Yet before applying this theory to the specificities of Japanese cultural products, it is first necessary to briefly discuss the broader flows which operate on a global scale.

### **CENTERS AND PERIPHERIES**

At one point in time it might have been accurate to unproblematically discuss American cultural hegemony. In his book *Culture and Imperialism*, Edward Said

describes 'the epic scale of the United States global power' (1993:323), going on to note that '[n]ever has there been a consensus so difficult to oppose nor so easy and logical to capitulate to unconsciously.' (1993:323) Toby Miller summarises this period by writing that 'the US, as the world's leading exporter of culture, was transferring its dominant value system to others, with a corresponding diminution in the vitality and standing of local languages and traditions' (2005:22). This period of unquestioned American hegemony reflects the early period of Disney dominance during the early years of animation, as the extent of both Americanization and Disneyfication implied here are somewhat 'mythologized' (Wasko, 2001:224). Wasko expands on this point by stating 'Disney's version of the past never really existed.' (2001:173) Whilst perhaps not wholly accurate, this loose model of American cultural imperialism defines the era of early Disney success, such as in the initial theatrical release of *Snow White*.

However, this state of affairs was clearly not sustainable as, over the course of the twentieth century, American hegemony began to lose its position of dominance.

Iwabuchi, in his oft-cited volume *Recentering Globalization: Popular Culture and Japanese Transnationalism*, discusses the export of global cultural products in terms of 'centers' and 'peripheries' (2002:131). He specifically critiques the concept that America exists as the sole center in the global marketplace, commenting upon 'the relative decline of the main actor, the United States' (2002:40). In this sense, Iwabuchi suggests that the hegemony perpetuated by Hollywood no longer exercises full control over 'global cultural flows' (2002:40) and that the caricaturised flow of 'Americanization' (Iwabuchi, 2002:38) is no longer the status quo. Within the context

of our Ghibli case study, this relates to the postulation made in 'Chapter One – Animation: From Cartoons to Anime' that, whilst initially dominant, the first wave of Disneyfication has since abated, creating an environment navigable for the medium-genres of both the cartoon and anime. Yet Iwabuchi goes beyond merely suggesting America has been displaced from the center of global flows, writing that

the decentralization of global cultural power does not mean there are no longer dominant centers [...but rather that] the absolute symbolic center no longer belongs to a particular country or region and transnational cultural power is deeply intermingled with local indigenizing processes. (2002:44-6)

In presenting such an argument, Iwabuchi is careful to point out that the America's position of an absolute symbolic center no longer applies to the current geography of global cultural flows, going on to comment that there has been an apparent 'shift [away] from an emphasis on center-periphery relations to a diffusion of cultural power' (2002:40). By positing that the process of globalization has become 'decentered' (2002:35), Iwabuchi provides the framework for a re-mapping of the global cultural flow between various dominant centers.

Precisely when this shift towards decentralization occurred is debatable, but if the popularity of anime in the West is any indicator, one could argue that the first signs of such a shift began with the appearance of *Kimba The White Lion* (1950 – 1954) and

*Astro Boy* (1952 – 1968), progressing all the way until reaching the era of *Dragon Ball* (1986 – present) and *Akira* in the late 1980s. At this temporal juncture, a number of academics have posited a sea change in global distribution. David Morley and Kevin Robins write that ‘during the 1980s, as a consequence of the complex interplay of regulatory, economic and technological change, dramatic upheavals took place in the media industries, laying the basis for what must be seen as a new media order.’ (1995:11) This ‘new media order’ ultimately results in a greater competition between successful companies, creating a situation where, ‘in the 1990s, the [...] drive for market and competitive position has been significantly transformed.’ (Morley and Robins, 1995:13) Charles Acland also notices a shift in the globalization of American film at this turning point, writing that the period between 1986 and 1998 was characterised by ‘Hollywood’s increasing reliance on global markets’ (2003:18). This reliance necessitated an imbalance of power between Hollywood and other key centers, resulting in a rebalancing of power relations and thus a situation of decentralization.

Writing specifically on animation, Pallant comments on this period that, ‘[o]n a global scale, animation entered a period of evolution during the late 1980s and early 1990s, with films such as *Akira* (1988), Hayao Miyazaki’s *My Neighbor Totoro* (1988), *Kiki’s Delivery Service* (1989) and *Porco Rosso* (1992), and Aardman Animation’s *Wallace and Gromit in the Wrong Trousers* [(Nick Park, 1993)]’ (2011:90). In the context of anime, this time period also overlaps with Toonami screenings on Cartoon Network, the proliferation of *Pokémon* (1997 – present) and other dissemination of the anime

fantasyscape. Moreover, the timeframe Acland identifies resonates particularly well with the case study of this thesis, as it suggests that the shift in power occurred between the releases of the first Miyazaki feature produced by Ghibli, *Laputa: Castle in the Sky*, and the Disneyfication process of *Princess Mononoke*, the first film to be re-distributed by Disney following the Disney-Tokuma Deal. Using the earlier example of the 1992 release of *Porco Rosso*, it is during this period – after anime’s appearance in the West but before its deliberate Disneyfication – that the anime fantasyscape is given the space to traverse the world as a global flow freely.

As a side note, it is also this period which gives rise to a pattern of ‘critical regionalism’ (Frampton, 1985), or ‘a local regional culture that sees itself not introspectively but as an inflexion of global culture’ (Morley and Robins, 1995:2). Within the context of Ghibli, this pertains to its distribution of its films throughout Asia and the broader cultivation of what might be variably termed, a ‘geo-cultural region’ (Iwabuchi, 2002:130), a regional ‘image space’ (Morley and Robins, 1995:31), or a ‘periphery’ (Iwabuchi, 2002:131) of ‘Occidentalism’ (Robertson, 1991:192). Because Disney has never been granted the rights to distribute Ghibli texts in this market, this state of affairs continues relatively unchanged through to the present day. This is an example of Ghibli going global which is *not* directly subject to Disneyfication and as such this thesis will not focus on it directly, instead leaving intellectual space for future academic study to be carried out in this area.

However, there is an issue with the decentralization thesis concerning the extent to which cultural products are (un)evenly distributed across the globe. On this matter, Iwabuchi comments that 'we should not assume that such [decentered] flows totally replace the old power relations, as the current cultural flows are always already overdetermined by the power relations and geopolitics embedded in the history of imperialism and colonialism' (2002:48). The key point Iwabuchi raises here is that whilst the absolute symbolic center of America is declining and certain dominant centers, such as Japan, are gaining popularity around the world, these events must be considered in the context of a complex socio-history of geopolitics. The slate is not wiped clean: whilst American power is waning, there remains an array of factors that work in favour of Americanization including, but not limited to: the widespread utilisation of the English language as the *lingua franca*; an existing network of infrastructure designed specifically to distribute Anglophone cultural products on a global scale; and the cultivation of a taste for certain American cultural products amongst a variety of consumer bases around the world. As a result, the overall pattern of global cultural flows is weighted in favour of Americanization so that the Western influence is felt more keenly than the impact emanating from other dominant centers.

In turn, the new media order posited by Morley and Robins shifts up a gear and multinational corporations such as Disney are increasingly 'securing control over programming (production, archives), over distribution and over transmission systems. The flow of images and products is both more intensive and more extensive than in the past [...] American cultural domination remains a fundamental part of this new

order' (1995:13-4). In terms of the paratextual case study discussed within this thesis, one can understand the Disney-Tokuma Deal in terms of guaranteeing Disney access to the distribution and transmission systems for the global Ghibli consumption base outside of Asia and ensuring that Hayao Miyazaki films became some of the most globally accessible anime texts (Denison, 2007:308). This deal narrows the forces of globalization which would otherwise act on a text on a case-by-case basis – thereby avoiding a future repetition of the New World Pictures' *Warriors of the Wind* scenario – and thus contributes to a wider 'new phase of global cultural flow dominated by a small number of transnational corporations' (Iwabuchi, 2002:37). This move radically alters the landscape of Ghibli as a global flow; the systemscape of Disneyfication overwrites the fantasyscape of Ghibli's anime. Thus, one can notice a separate period of Ghibli history characterised by paratextual and distributional Disneyfication, ranging from the signing of the Disney-Tokuma Deal in 1996 until the present day. This division is highlighted by Miyazaki's two books spanning his career, entitled *Starting Point (1979 ~ 1996)* and *Turning Point (1997 ~ 2008)*, which suggest that the author himself accepts an evolution in Ghibli's modes of delivery. As Bryman notes, Disneyfication exists to 'spread the canon of consumerism and to provide an infrastructure for it' (2004:157), resulting in distributional 'deterritorialisation' (Morley and Robins, 1995:1) and consequently the 'elaboration of transnational systems of delivery' (Morley and Robins, 1995:1-2). Iwabuchi comments that 'the most serious shortcoming of the Japanese animation industry, despite mature production capabilities and techniques, is its lack of international distribution channels' (2002:38), going on to note that

media globalization [...] promotes the incorporation of Japanese, and other non-Western, media products into the Western-dominated global distribution network. Japanese media industries and cultural products cannot successfully become transnational players without partners [...] Western (American) global distribution power is thus indispensable to make Japanese animation a part of global popular culture. The process can be called an “Americanization of Japanization.” (2002:38)

Here Iwabuchi introduces a critical concept to the discussion: that the processes of Americanization and Japanization are not mutually exclusive forces competing against one another but rather as two distinct phases within the same overarching process of globalization itself. Within the context of this case study, one might further posit the systemsclaping of the fantasyscape, or even more specifically, the Disneyfication of ‘Miyazafication’ (Hernández-Pérez, 2016:309). Thus, when watching the Disneyfied version of *Howl*, one might be more influenced by the systemscape of Disneyfication than the fantasyscape of anime and thus feel the effect of the center of America as a site of re-distribution moreso than the global flows originating Japanese center.

Having taken into account the factors enabling Disneyfication, the only remaining factor to add to this schema is the existence of Disneyfication beyond America’s borders, continuing a concept alluded to above: the center and the periphery (Iwabuchi, 2002:131). Historically, the concept of the periphery originates from a discussion of pre-modern empire building, wherein much importance was placed upon

'the boundary that separated the core of the Roman Empire from its periphery' (Bordo and Flandreau, 2003:417). Bringing this debate into the present day requires the substitution of the Roman Empire with the American lifestyle and thus in this scenario America is the core, or center, producing cultural content and the rest of the world is the periphery consuming it. This builds on the work of Said (1993), Yoshimoto (1994) and John Tomlinson (1999) and their discussion of both Disney and America in terms of 'cultural imperialism', wherein the rest of the world adopts American ideas and media, leading to 'cultural convergence and homogenisation' (2004:307) and ultimately resulting in 'the penetration of globalizing media into our everyday lives' (Tomlinson, 1999:10). In this scenario, one can position the UK as an Anglophonic periphery to America's cultural imperialism and as such it is through the systemscape of American Disneyfication that the UK is presented with Ghibli content rather than the fantasyscape of Japanese anime.

Whilst the above contextualisation of global flows pertaining to Ghibli products provides a very basic foundation for the trajectories of global cultural flows, it must be understood as one method of representing general trends and not a straightforward expression of the reality of globalization. Iwabuchi is right to point out that globalization processes are too chaotic, decentralizing, and disjunctive to be explained by a center-periphery model (2002:48). Yet it is my contention that whilst the entire system of global cultural flows is too complex to be accurately expressed by *a single* center-periphery model, that does not necessitate the negation of the center-periphery model hypothesis. Rather, I posit that one can apply the center-periphery

model not in a global, all-encompassing sense, but instead it can be re-defined on a case-by-case basis to allow variance between agencies, time periods and texts. Thus, the analysis which follows is inherently specific to the relationship between the fantasyscape of Ghibli and the systemscape of Disney as it plays out across the centers of Japan and America and the peripheries of Asia and the UK.

### **GHIBLI GOING GLOBAL**

When discussing the earlier work of Hayao Miyazaki, *Spirited Away*, Denison writes that

the further Miyazaki's film moved west, towards its American release in September 2002, the more negotiation and change took place. Moreover, the further the film travelled, the more it moved away from its initial 'blockbuster' roots. In Japan the film was a popular hit, breaking all box-office records, whereas by the time *Spirited Away* was released in the United States it was being positioned as art worthy of Academy Award-winning status. (2007:310)

Whilst I largely agree with this argument, I postulate that this proposition requires further unpacking in order to understand the degree to which the systemscape of Disneyfication plays a role in this evolution. Firstly, the arrival of the product in America is not the final stage in the distribution process and the impact of

Disneyfication can be felt in the UK and beyond. Moreover, I question the straightforward divide between the 'big hit' – or '*daihitto*' (Denison, 2008a:103) – and the 'art worthy' film, positing that these identities are not mutually exclusive and that both these statuses co-exist across multiple markets. This continues Morley and Robins' principle of 'global accumulation' (1995:109), wherein global corporations 'must now operate and compete in the world arena in terms of [...] the close understanding of markets. And they must operate in all markets simultaneously, rather than sequentially.' (1995:109). Thus, both Ghibli and Disney must remain aware of the temporal closeness of global markets and take into account that labels and narratives applied to a given film do not disappear in transition and globally accumulate as the texts traverse the globe. On this matter, Wells writes that 'films can operate on a number of levels and facilitate the appreciation of the art critic and [...] the cultural cynic.' (1998:231). In other words, the opinions of both the art critic and cultural cynic globally accumulate throughout the global flows of a Ghibli film, both before and after its Disneyfication.

As alluded to above, the first stage of my argument operates on the basis that there exist two centers which hold power over the global distribution of Hayao Miyazaki films: Japan and America, or perhaps more specifically Ghibli and Disney. The remaining geographies of Asia and the UK are peripheral markets for the Japanese and American distributors. This is of course a gross simplification of the scenario, as Ghibli films are translated into a number of languages, like French and German, and then re-distributed around the world. Studies such as those undertaken by Denison (2007) and

Ogihara-Schuck (2014) have begun to broaden the depth of understanding in this field and there is space for much more in-depth research to be carried out. For the purposes of this study however, I shall be examining the Anglophonic campaign only. My approach has been to break down the flow of globalization into distinct stages characterised by their relationship to the systems-caping of the fantasyscape. In total, I posit that there are five stages of the official Ghibli global cultural flow: domestic distribution, regional distribution, international film festival distribution, Disneyfication distribution and Disneyfication re-distribution. At this juncture I should note that although the following re-mapping of the global cultural flow of Ghibli endeavours to adhere to a chronological trajectory, both overlapping exhibition schedules and variances from film to film result in not one but multiple flows. With that in mind, this examination has arranged individual stages in an order which is at least broadly chronological and representative of the most prevalent flow.

Following both the production and (domestic) promotion phase, Ghibli films are released *within* Japan in the first phase of domestic distribution. As well as holding importance for the manifest basis of acting as the first instance of widespread exhibition, this stage is especially noteworthy because the Japanese consumer is the original intended audience. In an interview with *Newsweek.com* in 2005, Hayao Miyazaki remarks that

I think only about my Japanese audience when I make a film. Of course, I'm delighted that people from other countries also enjoy my films. But I try not to

think of this as an international business [...] somewhere my producer is probably saying the exact opposite. (quoted in Gordon, 2005:1)

I argue that in this comment, Hayao Miyazaki reveals an inner tension in the distribution of Studio Ghibli texts. To a given extent the *auteur* Hayao Miyazaki must have the domestic target audience in mind at all times and so the release of Ghibli films to the Japanese audience would appear to be the most significant phase of the distribution process. One could reasonably argue that a sizeable proportion of attention is directed towards the domestic theatrical release and for this reason the Japanese consumer arguably holds a position of 'privileged discourse' (Khare, 1992:5) over the anime of Hayao Miyazaki. Denison points out that in non-Japanese versions of Hayao Miyazaki films 'nuances and jokes become transcribed into little more than further evidence of the film's Oriental origins' (2007:318), continuing to note that the 'reception of Japanese film outside Japan [is] often based around partial recognitions and uneven cultural awareness that can foster *different* interpretations' (2007:318, emphasis in original). Whether or not the domestic audience does hold a privileged position over other consumers, the original version of the text distributed within the dominant center of Japan is unquestionably unique in that little to no negotiation takes place between the text which is completed by Hayao Miyazaki and the text which is exhibited in Japanese theatres.

At this point an observation needs to be conveyed which at first seems obvious: the domestic market for Japanese cultural products is still by far the most lucrative for

anime producers (Annett, 2014:180). Whilst the analysis in this thesis may give the impression that much emphasis is placed on the global market, the fact remains that it is the Japanese cinemagoing audience that generate the bulk of the profit for Studio Ghibli. In the case of *Ponyo* for example, the Japanese box office takings made up 82% of the total box office takings, outperforming American ticket sales more than tenfold ('Ponyo', N.D.b). In terms of visibility and ubiquitousness, the domestic campaign certainly seems to have the upper hand. Denison, again writing on *Spirited Away*, comments that in Japan 'the print campaign alone for the film included over 30 images and there were nine additional theatrical trailers and ten television advertisements produced just for the Japanese market' (2007:312). In terms of *Howl*, *Ponyo* and *Wind* there were also extensive media campaigns, including outputs made for a myriad of different media. Whilst Ghibli products are visible across multiple media platforms in every market, their domestic campaigns are undoubtedly the most omnipresent due to the affiliation between Studio Ghibli and its partner Japanese companies such as NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation / *Nippon Hōsō Kyōkai*). In fact, NHK grew to have such an influence upon Studio Ghibli that it directly influenced not only the promotion, distribution and exhibition of Ghibli products but actually impacted the production process of *Wind* itself, as evidenced in the illuminating documentary *The Kingdom of Dreams and Madness / Yume to kyōki no ōoku* (Mami Sunada, 2013) (00:48:19 - 00:49:31). Such a close connection between Ghibli and NHK indicates the extent to which the domestic campaign intensely focuses on a policy of broad media coverage.

An additional point is that the Japanese media which surround the Hayao Miyazaki *oeuvre* are not limited to paid-for promotional materials directly emanating from Ghibli itself. A sizeable facet of the domestic media coverage pertains to media speculation regarding perceived success or controversy: with *Howl* there was gossip concerning the directorship passing between Mamoru Hosoda and Hayao Miyazaki midway through production (“ONE PIECE –omatsuri danshyaku to tohimitsu no shima–’ Mamoru Hosoda intabyuu (2)’, 2016); with *Ponyo* there was much discussion about how successfully the theme song was performing in Japanese music charts (‘Ponyo shudaika, Jiburi kyoku de rekidai saikou 3i & ‘Tsutomu-kun’ iraiyaku 32nen buri kaikyo’, 2009); and with *Wind* there was an uproar about whether or not the film actively promoted smoking (‘Eiga ‘Kaze Tachinu’ de no tabako no atsukai ni tsuite (yōbō)’, 2013). Through an awareness of articles such as these, one can see that, even when not propagated by Ghibli itself, the domestic distribution phase is accompanied by an array of paratextual media coverage that contextualises consumption within the dominant center of Japan as a national phenomenon that almost transcends the theatrical experience.

Within regional distribution, Ghibli films are shipped from the originating dominant center of Japan to the East Asia marketplace, specifically the peripheries of South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong. The center-periphery relationship between Japan and Asia does not necessitate an overdeterministic ‘straightforward economic or cultural domination of Asia by Japan’ (Iwabuchi, 2002:84) to the extent of denying the possibility of reverse traffic: certainly Japan could be described as peripheral to the

cinemas of South Korea or Hong Kong. Instead, one must remain mindful that such a close relationship is inexorably linked to a complex regional history of colonialism and cross-cultural pollination, resulting in what Iwabuchi terms 'cultural proximity' (2002:130), which is to say 'a sameness between the Japanese and Asian populaces' (2002:66). It is worth noting here that the idiosyncracies of the relationships between these populaces are unique to the region and that the distribution of power in post-colonial East Asia is at once both familiar and alien to Western audiences; as Annett writes 'a full understanding of anime's globalization must take into account its regional flows and frictions, which both reflect and diverge from East/West models of power' (2014:144). In this sense it is problematic to suppose straightforwardly that dominant centers like Japan can be faultlessly assumed to act as the primary center to the region as a whole. Yet based on popular success alone, there can be little doubt that when it comes to Japanese cultural products the region of these East Asian metropolises acts as the periphery for goods emanating from the dominant center of Japan. Iwabuchi goes as far as to describe their relationship as one of 'power asymmetry' (2002:84), going on to remark that 'Japanese civilization has consequently become a model for other parts of Asia to follow' (2002:71). Thus a dynamic has become established which accommodates the position of Japan as producer and East Asia as consumer; as Iwabuchi comments, 'it is East Asia that has provided Japanese media culture with its largest export market and most avid audience' (2006:65).

As mentioned earlier, because these Asian marketplaces are not directly impacted by Disneyfication, this thesis does not dwell on this aspect of Ghibli going global, leaving

space for future studies to elaborate on this topic. However, a cursory glance at the box office figures show that when combined, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore, account for a sizeable proportion of the international market share when excluding the markets of Japan and the US, amounting to 57% for *Howl* ('Howl's Moving Castle: Foreign', N.D.:1), 51% for *Ponyo* ('Ponyo: Foreign', N.D.:1) and 18% for *Wind* ('The Wind Rises: Foreign', N.D.:1). It should be noted at this juncture that these figures should not be taken as the total grossed from these ventures, as reliable data on these matters does not yet exist. Wasko elaborates on the matter that

it is a real challenge to locate reliable data [...]. Researchers are often forced to rely on the whims of company officials and industry trade gossip for the most basic financial data about production costs and actual revenues from films, much less the additional revenues gleaned from home video release, merchandising, tie-ins, etc. (2001:80-1)

However, as broad indicators of larger trends, these figures are useful to understanding how much of a stake Ghibli has in marketing to this regional periphery and as such one can appreciate the power systems and financial pressure in place when Toshio Suzuki and Hayao Miyazaki view the world through an atlas, as they do quite literally in a scene in *The Kingdom of Dreams and Madness* (00:48:19 - 00:48:24). As the only global marketplace available to Ghibli after the Disney-Tokuma Deal, their decisions about the fantasyscaping of Ghibli texts within the Asian marketplace are critical for the continued profitability of the studio.

At this juncture, I should reiterate that, in practice, this stage of regional distribution overlaps somewhat with the following stage of international film festival distribution and the timelines will often differ somewhat from film to film. For the release schedules of both *Howl* ('Howl's Moving Castle: Release Info', N.D.) and *Wind* ('The Wind Rises: Release Info', N.D.) the texts were touring the international film festival circuit whilst simultaneously being exhibited in East Asia whereas, perhaps due to the lower age of the target audience, *Ponyo* ('Ponyo: Release Info', N.D.) for the most part appeared in just a handful of international film festivals before commencing with a regional release schedule. I argue that the intersection of these stages acts to multiply and accentuate both critical attention created by the international film festival stage and popular success evidenced within the regional stage so that it appears that a range of consumers from every corner of the globe are simultaneously lauding the film in question. These successes are united by auteur-stars like Toshio Suzuki, who often groups these geographies together in press conferences, such as through his comment that *Howl* would soon be screened in South Korea, France, Taiwan and Hong Kong following its reception at the Venice Film Festival ('Miyazaki's latest movie to get overseas distribution', 2004:1). When considered in this manner, the regional distribution of popular Ghibli films within East Asia, whilst no doubt lucrative in and of itself, also has the additional benefit of complementing the critical reception within the international film festival circuit. In such a way, the global flows of Ghibli's fantasyscape begins the process of globally accumulating both popular and critical acclaim which can then be built upon by the systemscape of Disneyfication during later distribution stages.

The stage of international film festival distribution is particularly critical because of its interstitial nature *between* the dominant centers of Japan and America. Borrowing a term from Morley and Robins, one might describe this phase as the ‘global-local nexus’ (1995:115) – that is, the theoretical meeting point of the global and the local which oversees ‘new and intricate relations between global space and local space.’ (1995:116) The ‘power dynamics of the international film festival circuit’ (Stringer, 2001:134) play an integral role in the global distribution of Ghibli films by expanding the potential target audience and engendering critical acclaim. A particularly crucial venue in the international film festival distribution stage of Ghibli texts is the Venice Film Festival. This key location not only hosted the non-Japanese debut for both *Ponyo* and *Wind*, but significantly accommodated the worldwide premiere of *Howl*. Nikki Lee notes that ‘[w]hen it passes through transnational sites of reception, such as international film festivals, the locality of a film often becomes displaced as it is endowed with new layers of meaning and significance’ (2008:212). In the context of our case study, the layers of significance applied to a Ghibli film generally pertain to critical acclaim of the brand-names of both the studio and director, in this case Hayao Miyazaki. Dani Cavallaro notes that the 61<sup>st</sup> Venice Film Festival held in 2004 saw *Howl* awarded the ‘Osella Award for Technical Excellence’, an accolade presented to the entity of Studio Ghibli itself and just one year later in 2005 during the 62<sup>nd</sup> Venice Film Festival, Hayao Miyazaki received an honorary ‘Golden Lion’ for his achievements over the course of his career, becoming both the first Japanese director and the first animator to be thusly honoured (2006:157). Through a focus on the original creators of the text, the international film festival proves to be a valuable platform for generating

critical interest in the animations of Ghibli. By hosting international debuts, as well as aiding the propagation of the brand-names of Ghibli and Hayao Miyazaki, these three films are more able to attract the attention of academics and critics worldwide.

Although these screenings are taking place outside Asia and thus would ordinarily fall under the purview of the distribution arms of Disney and America, it is not a re-dubbed version but the original Japanese film, albeit with language appropriate subtitles, that is entered into international film festival competitions directly by Ghibli itself. And yet these appearances perform a critical role for the Disneyfication of *Howl*, *Ponyo* and *Wind*. Julian Stringer writes that 'festivals can make or break new films. Certainly, many of the larger events act as launching pads for foreign (i.e. non-US), marginal or "difficult" movies, and as such constitute an 'alternative' distribution network for contemporary world cinema' (2003:82). Denison expands upon this concept of film festivals as 'launching pads' (2007:314), noting that although Hayao Miyazaki films do not need to seek global distribution thanks to the Disney-Tokuma deal (2007:314-5), international film festivals are nonetheless beneficial to the global success of Ghibli products, writing that 'the free publicity and high profile market entry [...] must be understood as part of its marketing to Europe' (2007:315). I would go further and posit that the launching pad effect of the international film festival has a marked impact beyond the boundaries of the European marketplace and directly affects the Disneyfied American market and beyond. Evidence of this can be seen in the paratexts themselves, such as the film poster for *Wind* which boasts of numerous festival accolades (see 'Chapter Five – Promotion: Disneyfying the Paratext').

Finally, we reach the moment upon which this thesis centres: the Disneyfication distribution stage. At this juncture Studio Ghibli relinquishes control of Hayao Miyazaki films over to Disney, not just in terms of promotion, distribution and exhibition but also re-production and re-dubbing. It is important to note here that the Disneyfication distribution stage encompasses more than the rights of distribution passing between the two dominant centers of Japan to America and that this phase also encompasses distribution amongst non-English language speaking countries. Critically, Denison's chosen case-study of France (2007) was often amongst the first European countries to screen *Spirited Away* as part of a major theatrical run, well before an American re-dubbed version was ever released. This trend continued for the releases of *Howl*, *Ponyo* and *Wind* wherein the films were released in France significantly before the American re-dub was disseminated. A key aspect of the French release of *Spirited Away* is that the subtitled and re-dubbed versions were exhibited simultaneously (Denison, 2007:315) in order to cater for both 'invested, fan audiences' (2007:315) and 'general French audiences' (2007:315) respectively. Denison continues to remark that as a result 'reviews of the film appeared in both popular and specialist print media, providing evidence for a thriving popular and additionally a more elitist market for the film in this French context' (2007:316). Again, one can observe the construction of a globally cumulative effect wherein both popular and critical audiences appear to be simultaneously praising a given Ghibli film as both a box-office smash hit *and* a cinematic masterpiece. In fact, a number of European countries were able to subtitle, re-dub and release these three films before their US counterparts, including Spain, Netherlands, Belgium, Russia and Croatia (see 'Howl's Moving Castle: Release Info',

N.D.; 'Ponyo: Release Info', N.D.; 'The Wind Rises: Release Info', N.D.). Whilst such a diversity might seem to indicate a victory over American hegemony, it is important to reiterate that Disney owns the theatrical rights for Ghibli films *worldwide* and thus these European releases are undertaken by Disney, often in conjunction with or subcontracted to a local distribution agency, in order to both test the core appeal and target audience of the film in question as well as to continue the appearance of a globally cumulative success story across multiple socio-linguistic markets. In terms of the center-periphery debate, this stage can be thought of as Disney experimenting with the exhibition of Ghibli films in a Western *periphery* before bringing the film to America.

All of which brings me to discuss the arrival of the film in America and thus the completion of the trajectory between the two centers of Japan and America. It is at this juncture that the films are transformed 'at the level of [the] text' (Denison, 2007:315) wherein 'Japanese elements were progressively siphoned off or altered in attempts to market the film to the maximum of potential global audiences' (2007:310). As this thesis is more concerned with the paratextual than the specificities of textual variation, this analysis will neither focus upon the changes wrought to the film's dialogue necessitated by the socio-linguistic barrier between the two centers, nor does it restate the alterations to the branding or marketing that will be addressed in the next three chapters. Instead, this segment turns to the arrival of the anime of Hayao Miyazaki in America in terms of its wider context within the global flow of Ghibli goods.

It may appear at first to be an obvious point, but it bears mentioning: there exists a 'temporal lag' (Iwabuchi, 2002:49; Denison, 2015:14) between the exhibition of Hayao Miyazaki films in the centers of Japan and America. From a given film's worldwide premiere to the opening day of widespread screenings in America (not including international film festivals) a significant period of time elapses: 278 days for *Howl*; 391 days for *Ponyo*; 217 days for *Wind*. The Western consumer who utilises only official channels of distribution has become so accustomed to the fact of temporal lag that one barely registers its existence, let alone question its purpose. And yet, in comparison to the temporal lag between the center of Japan and the periphery of South Korea – 111 days for *Howl*; 152 days for *Ponyo*; 48 days for *Wind* – the American re-production process appears particularly calculated. Even taking into account the Anglophone translation process for the script, scheduling the Hollywood stars involved in the re-dubbing, the recording of any additional Western music tracks and the American promotional process, the temporal lag between South Korea and America seems suspiciously slow-paced, with a full 239 days passing between the South Korean and the American release of *Ponyo*. As referenced earlier, there is a considerable degree of overlap between this stage of Disneyfication and international film festival distribution, wherein critical acclaim is globally accumulated. Yet if East Asian and European socio-linguistic geographies can produce their own socio-linguistic versions relatively swiftly, then the delayed American rollout must be *deliberately protracted* so as to generate hype and test the waters of a given Ghibli film in the global marketplace and to globally accumulate popular success and critical acclaim from multiple sources.

As should be apparent by this point, my argument concerning the global flows of Ghibli hinges on the concept of global cumulation. That is to say that Disneyfication is certainly not the beginning of Ghibli's globalization and that within the three stages discussed up to this point – domestic, regional and international film festival distribution – both popular success and critical attention *accrues* across national borders. Denison, commenting upon the global flows of *Spirited Away*, writes that the film 'negotiated markets across the globe that were not wholly distinct but which bled into one another' (2007:319). Thus, one cannot usefully separate the relative popular success that a Hayao Miyazaki anime text achieves in South Korea or the critical acclaim that it garners at the Venice Film Festival from the text's re-appearance in America some months later. Indeed, the American promotional phase makes use of both concepts in the marketing process. As noted in 'Chapter Five – Promotion: Disneyfying the Paratext', popular brand-names such as Ghibli, Disney and Hayao Miyazaki form a layered brand (Denison, 2015:120) and are utilised strategically throughout the American marketing campaign. These brand-names are intended to entice the lucrative popular audience that are traditionally attracted by auteur-stars and author-functions. Yet at the same time, such brand-names are inflected by the mention of international film festivals and thus the text is legitimised as worthy of critical attention. Following a process of global accumulation, both popular and critical inflections combine in order to attract the widest possible audience and in turn reap the most profit.

Following the Ghibli's text release in America, the final official global flow of Ghibli products is characterised by Disneyfication re-distribution. As I established earlier, due to a complex history of geo-politics and colonisation, numerous peripheries exist which rely upon the distributional center of America. These peripheries are varied and distinct from one another in terms of their socio-linguistic relationships; one might expect the traditionally Anglophone peripheries of Australia and the UK for instance to share differing degrees of cultural heritage with the American center. Regardless of the culturally proximate nature of their specific center-periphery relationship, many of these peripheries receive the global, which is to say Disneyfied, version of any given Hayao Miyazaki animation. It is in this instance that one may witness the Americanization of Japanization phenomenon that Iwabuchi discusses: Japanese products which have enraptured global audiences undergoing a metamorphosis to the extent that what is disseminated and consumed are the Disneyfied versions of aforesaid products.

Denison's 2007 study of the trajectory of *Spirited Away* ends with the study of America and the re-production process which transformed the film 'on the level of the text'. However, the journey does not end in America – Iwabuchi writes that there is no 'final stop in the indigenization process in global cultural flows' (2002:72). In a later text, Denison does acknowledge the existence of this periphery, positioning the UK as a 'tertiary site of anime distribution' (2015:23). Indeed, one would even expect that it would be simple to re-dub a UK version of the dialogue as the translation process could be largely copied from the American version. Interestingly, although the text

exists outside of the chosen case study of this thesis, one Ghibli film has been re-dubbed expressly for a British audience: *The Secret World of Arrietty*. Perhaps due to the fact that the original source material is British in origin, Studio Canal – the distribution company charged with disseminating Ghibli films in the UK – oversaw a British re-dub featuring the recognisably British and Irish star-images of Saoirse Ronan, Olivia Coleman and Mark Strong which actually screened in the UK 203 days *before* it appeared in America ('The Secret World of Arrietty: Release Info', N.D.). This film proves to be the exception to the rule for the distribution of Ghibli films, however, and no film directed by Hayao Miyazaki has to date been re-dubbed for a British audience and tellingly *Howl*, another Ghibli film based upon British source material, was not given the same treatment. The obvious logic behind this decision is that producing re-dubbed versions of Ghibli texts is expensive and it is more profitable for worldwide distribution companies to exhibit the Disneyfied version of the Ghibli text than produce their own. Yet, in addition to this reasoning, I argue that a prolonged period of Disneyfication has the effect that non-American audiences have now been accustomed to the notion of Hayao Miyazaki films dubbed into not just English but 'Natural American English' (John Lasseter quoted in Denison, 2007:317). In broader terms, although the globalization of anime has strategically utilised 'English as a global language' (2007:317), the accent which is disseminated around the world is not 'culturally odorless' (Iwabuchi, 2002:94). It is the Americanization of Japanization, the systems-caping of the fantasyscape and the Disneyfication of Miyazafication ideologies which continue to globally accumulate both popular and critical capital and that are being packaged and sold to consumers worldwide.

Having established the above working model of the official global flow of Ghibli products, I should at this juncture modulate this understanding with a consideration of consumption contexts. Firstly, I should like to state that for many consumers the above description of global flows and their influences remains accurate and that a UK audience might well experience the Disneyfication of Ghibli films as outlined immediately above. However, the above model is based primarily on cinematic distribution and, in this modern digital era, theatrical exhibition encompasses just one possible consumption context of a given Ghibli film. One only needs to take a cursory glance at the worldwide box office figures for the last three films directed by Hayao Miyazaki to observe that consuming anime in the cinema has fallen out of fashion: *Howl* garnered \$237,814,327 ('Hauru no ugoku shiro (2005)', N.D.); *Ponyo* earned \$205,312,667 ('Gake no ue no Ponyo (2009)', N.D.); and *Wind* managed just \$117,924,700 ('Kaze Tachinu (2013)', N.D.). Naturally, such figures should not necessarily be taken fully at face value, as they do not take into account a whole host of factors such as inflation or global economic climate, as well as the more complex subject matter of *Wind* as noted in later chapters. However, when utilised as a more general indicator, one can observe a decline in box-office takings amounting to over \$100 million between *Howl* in 2004 and *Wind* in 2014. Several academics (Denison, 2011b; Cubbison, 2005) also discuss anime in terms of DVD and Blu-ray sales and, again, using figures of which one should remain sceptical, one can observe a steady downward trend in home-video sales, plunging from the \$16,837,421 ('Hauru no ugoku shiro (2005)', N.D.) accrued by *Howl* to *Wind's* mere \$7,137,018 ('Kaze Tachinu (2013)', N.D.).

The explanation for the waning of both of these revenue streams is a symptom of our digital age: profits have been plummeting since the advent of alternative distribution. That is, some consumers practise piracy and circumvent official distribution channels, making their own decision about which linguistic version of the film to consume. This phenomenon is largely linked to technological evolution, as Denison notes through her identification of 'a third wave of anime, a wave defined by cable television and the advent of the Internet and DVD technologies that have made anime more globally accessible' (2007:319). In terms of the long-term effects within the industry, the costs are staggeringly high; in a report prepared for the Motion Picture Association in 2006, global illegal downloads cost the media industry around \$18 billion annually ('The Cost of Movie Piracy', 2006:4). This issue is hotly contested – despite the fact that some authors suggest possible benefits to anime piracy (Schwabach, 2008; Holwerda, 2011), it is the opinion of other scholars that piracy presents structural difficulties: LaMarre has posited that 'communicative labour [...] poses a challenge to received organizations of labor' (2006:362) and Annett echoes this view, writing that 'postnational flow [...] disrupts classical cinema spectatorship' (2014:202). This thesis does not intend to focus on studies of piracy, as there is a wealth of academic research on this topic (Thomas, 2002; Condry, 2004; Lee, 2011; Lobato, 2012), even within the specific context of anime piracy (Cubbison, 2005; Leonard, 2005; Hatcher, 2005; Denison, 2011b; Napier, 2008). Instead, it simply intends to briefly point out that piracy continues to propagate the Disneyfication of Ghibli beyond the official channels themselves.

James Arvanitakis and Martin Fredriksson write that ‘we now live in a global distribution system that has moved beyond ‘the network’ to be ‘a constellation’. Like the constellations in the sky that we stare at in wonder, the connections are often not visible and can be incredibly difficult to understand’ (2014:2). Utilising this framework, one can see how every single point of exhibition can now act as a tertiary re-distribution center to maintain the entire alternative distribution network, resulting in a final, ongoing stage one might term ‘piracy constellation distribution’. Despite the scale and impact of this final stage, it is important to remember that this global flow does not inherently provide an alternative to Disneyfication. Returning to our understanding that Disneyfication acts as an artificially adhered set of processes (Bryman, 2004:159) and because Disneyfication is located not just in the aurality of the text but also the themed narrative of the paratext, a native English speaker is still very likely to be influenced by Disneyfied narratives which have been applied to the text through the paratext. As such, despite the obvious negation of Disney’s financial capital, *on an ideological and cultural level*, piracy continues to propagate the Disneyfication of Ghibli in the global marketplace.

This chapter has mapped out how Ghibli commodities have flowed across the globe and, in so doing, their branded sub-genre has been commuted by the processes of Disneyfication. In the next chapter, ‘Chapter Three – Stardom: Re-Dubbing and Star-Images’, I begin to explore how the Disneyfication distribution and Disneyfication re-distribution stages outlined above are constructed within the confines of the paratext. By analysing six star-image case studies, this analysis begins to unpack the precise

mechanisms of Disneyfication undertaken when re-marketing a Ghibli text to a global audience.

### CHAPTER THREE – STARDOM:

#### RE-DUBBING AND STAR-IMAGES

##### RE-DUBBING *HOWL'S MOVING CASTLE*

Christian Bale has had an illustrious career spanning four decades, first appearing as a child star in *Anastasia: The Mystery of Anna* (Marvin J. Chomsky, 1986) at the age of twelve. Although he performed in a number of films over the coming years, it is not until *American Psycho* (Mary Harron, 2000) that he truly makes an impact upon the global stage. Following the success of this breakthrough film, Bale continues to appear in a range of other mainstream films like *Equilibrium* (Kurt Wimmer, 2002) as well as more independent texts such as *The Machinist* (Brad Anderson, 2004). *Howl* is released in the same year as *The Machinist*, although it is my position that, utilising campaign analysis, it is necessary to take into account not only past performances but also *future* performances. Following his performance in *Howl*, Bale continues to align his star-image with the mainstream action genre through appearances in the *Batman* trilogy: *Batman Begins* (Christopher Nolan, 2005), *The Dark Knight* (Nolan, 2008) and *The Dark Knight Rises* (Nolan, 2012). In analysing the auralty of his performance in *Howl*, using Denison's approach of focusing on the 'level of pitch, accent and pacing', these are the three performances which I believe have the greatest impact upon a subsequent reading of *Howl*. These texts provide intertextual digressions (Klinger, 1991) which affect the canon of Bale anachronistically. Indeed, despite the fact that they were produced chronologically after *Howl*, they nonetheless retrospectively impact upon its

consumption. His portrayal of Howl is delivered at a very low pitch, almost gravelly in its *timbre*. Despite Bale himself being of Welsh heritage and the character and setting of *Howl* being based on the Welsh countryside, the accent Bale delivers is far more American than British. Finally, the pacing is relatively slow compared to the other vocal performances in the text and unaffected by the pace of the action. If we compare this aural profile to his performance in the *Batman* trilogy, we notice a striking similarity: again we are presented with Bale delivering a low-pitched, slow-paced American accent. It is my conjecture that a consumer watching *Howl* today may well note the parallel between Howl and Batman.

At this point I would like to stress two crucial points. Firstly, that the decision for Bale to deliver such a low-pitched, slow-paced American-accented delivery was not entirely his own and that this performance was heavily influenced by the producers behind the localization process. As Gianluca Sergi points out '[a]ctors have limited control over their voice.' (1999:136) In fact, one can observe this phenomenon occurring during the dub itself through an examination of paratextual material. In the 'Behind the Microphone' segment for *Howl* Bale is shown delivering the short line 'go away', but is told by Rick Dempsey, co-producer and co-director of the localized version, that 'I'd like to try one just a little more forceful' after which Bale delivers a lower-pitched, slower-paced, more Americanised version of the same line (see (00:00:45 – 00:00:58), 'Howl's Moving Castle DVD Extra ~ Behind the Microphone', 2011).

Secondly, that, precisely because actors have limited vocal control, Bale may have replicated elements of his performance in *Howl* and thus presented a similar vocal delivery in the *Batman* trilogy. I would argue that whether or not Bale chose to do so does not necessarily negate the connection between the two films, nor does it invalidate an anachronistic consumption pattern. It is possible that even a passing foreknowledge of Bale as Batman, due to a similar delivery style, could provide an intertextual digression upon an audience's interpretation of Bale as Howl. I postulate that it is only by legitimising the anachronistic approach that campaign analysis can begin to move towards a more realistic understanding of consumption patterns. That is to say that, because almost all primary paratextual are easily available online uploaded by both fans and studios alike, the promotional campaign is in many ways ongoing. Film producers, commentators and scholars do not have access to the future. To understand the historical specific moment of the film's production utilising Johnston's unified analysis is still a worthwhile approach to undertake and yet, unless one takes a transhistoric campaign analysis perspective, it becomes impossible to account for the ongoing effect of star signification in the modern era of the digital paratext.

In *Howl*, Grandma Sophie is the protagonist of the film. The role has been split in the casting: Jean Simmons provides the voice for the elderly utterances of this character and the younger vocalisations were provided by Emily Mortimer. Whilst Simmons had previously provided a vocal performance for an anime character in *Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within / Fainaru fantaji* (Hironobu Sakaguchi and Motonori Sakakibara, 2001),

there is evidence to suggest she viewed her involvement in voicing *Howl* as a wholly distinct experience, possibly due to the more fantastical nature of the 'narrative image' (Neale, 2000:160). In a brief interview during the North American premiere of the film, she remarked that 'I've always wanted to do a voice over, or play a bunny rabbit or somebody, but this was extraordinary' (see (00:03:11 – 00:03:24), 'howls moving casle premiere [*sic*]', 2010). This performance proved to be one of her last and Simmons passed away on January 22<sup>nd</sup> 2010.

I posit that, echoing my anachronistic campaign analysis position regarding the career trajectory of Bale, an audience armed with the foreknowledge of the death of Simmons and watching *Howl* for the first time today could well be influenced by this paratextual information. As Geraghty notes, stardom is 'constructed both intertextually (across different films) and extratextually (across different types of material)' (2000:185). Writing specifically about the dynamic nature of star-images post-mortem, Pallant adds the observation that due to the death of Orson Welles shortly after performing in *Transformers: The Movie*, the film was imbued with 'a unique, if not macabre, selling point as Welles's last film performance.' (2011:103) A revision of Simmons' star-image is aided by the narrative itself which, as mentioned above, often deals directly with the consequences of aging upon the human body. Throughout the film, Grandma Sophie often complains of aches and pains related to her elderly status. Grandma Sophie does not die in the film but, armed with the foreknowledge of her passing, one might revise consumption of *Howl*'s textuality

precisely because one is witnessing one of her final performances wherein her character is vocal about being ostensibly near the end of her life.

It follows that the anachronistic approach to consumption must be applicable not only to the intertextual digressions noted above concerning the star-image of Bale but also to extratextual, or, as they are referred to in this thesis, paratextual constructions. In the case of the star-image of Simmons, such paratextual material is not limited to a newspaper article or some other form of media, but includes the actual foreknowledge of her passing, which is to say that death modulated her star-image with what may be termed a revisionist digression. The revisionist approach does not necessitate the death of a star, but it does seem to aid the process. Precisely why the revisionist approach tends to occur more frequently following the death of a star remains unclear, although perhaps such instigators of a revisionist inflection perceive that the stars themselves would be able to refute and discredit such claims. One merely needs to return to perceptions concerning the star-image and revise them to correlate with a narrative one intends to propagate. For instance, a popular preconception concerning the star-image of Simmons was that, following the success during the early stages of her career, 'she slipped quietly into supporting roles in the shadow of strong men' (Harmetz, 2010:1). Yet significantly prior to her passing, Frank Maloney, in a review of *Spartacus* (Stanley Kubrick, 1960), proclaims that 'Jean Simmons was a marvel of strength and delicacy [...] who didn't find real strength until she became middle-aged' (1991:1). Aljean Harmetz's subjective conjecture here revises the popular preconception of Simmons' career propagated by Maloney amongst others.

Another popular preconception surrounding the star-image of Simmons is her contentious relationship with director Howard Hughes. Allegedly, Simmons had rejected his romantic advances which angered the director to the point where he 'took his revenge by refusing to lend Ms. Simmons to the director William Wyler, who wanted her to star in [...] *Roman Holiday* [(William Wyler, 1953)]' (Harmetz, 2010:1). The exact sequence of events is disputed with various sources, including the then husband of Simmons, Stewart Granger, seemingly contradicting one another (Norman, 2010:1). Yet after her passing in 2010, revisionists were free to re-appropriate information relating to Simmons in order to correlate with their own narrative. Just three days after her passing, journalist Barry Norman remarked that

Jean Simmons was a movie star, no doubt about that. But now, with her death from lung cancer at the age of 80, I can't help wondering how great a star she might have become had it not been for Howard Hughes. (2010:1)

Note that Norman validates his revisionist approach by qualifying that her demise legitimises his right to re-appropriate the narrative. He goes on to restate the contentions surrounding the relationship between Simmons and Hughes and to ruminate upon 'how different things might have been had Hughes allowed her to star in *Roman Holiday*' (2010:1). Norman goes as far as to directly dispute the account of Simmons herself, writing that

Hughes [...] was interested in her not just as an actress, but as a woman. In later life she denied this, saying that Hughes 'had never bothered her' and was 'very nice . . . so shy he would almost come into a room backwards'. But here she was being economical with the truth. (2010:1)

Whilst extreme in nature, this instance of the revisionist approach reflects the value of appreciating the anachronistic inflection upon a given text, particularly in the wake of the demise of a star. Upon viewing *Howl* today, one could arguably revise one's consumption with an updated account of the star-image of Simmons. Examining the case study of Simmons in this manner, the influence of a star-image's intertextual digressions must extend beyond the realms of historically specific moments.

It would be reasonable to assume that Disney, as a company, did not intend these anachronistic, revisionist readings of Bale and Simmons. Yet that it is not to say that Disneyfication, *as a set of processes*, does not benefit from them; reading across intertextual digressions in this manner does lead to a state of hybrid consumption in which Disneyfication is known to thrive. Moreover, continuing Byrne and McQuillan's point about the separation of narrative and text (1999:35), one can argue that the text and narrative of Bale and Simmons' star-images are distinct from one another, thereby allowing such a transhistoric reading and thus further implicating *Howl* as symptomatic of Disney's influence.

When discussed as a star-pair, Bale and Simmons act as apt intellectual spaces in which to problematise the Disney seasoned-inexperienced narrative. What constitutes experience? Is it only *vocal* performance that can render one star to be more seasoned than another? Can a wealth of live-action experience translate to one being positioned as the seasoned star? Does being positioned as seasoned or inexperienced reflect the actuality of the situation or does this relationship only exist to further Disney marketing strategies? First, let us briefly recap the experience that both Bale and Simmons bring to *Howl*. Despite a long and successful career in the cinema, Simmons has had very little experience as a voice actor. Prior to *Howl* she had held a very small role within the animation *Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within* as well as minor narration roles in *American Masters* (1985 – present) and *A Friendship in Vienna* (Arthur Allan Seidelman, 1988). In contrast, Bale had appeared in just one text requiring vocal performance: a minor character in the Disney animation *Pocahontas* (Mike Gabriel and Eric Goldberg, 1995). Despite the limited nature of the role, through this experience Bale was able to become acquainted with the systemscape and methods of delivery employed by Disney during the dubbing of an animation. In this respect, Bale arguably has more of a claim to the position of the seasoned star.

Interestingly, Bale is not discussed in any detail in the paratextual material surrounding *Howl*, nor does he appear in any promotional interviews. However, the subject of the degree of the experience of Simmons is addressed directly in *Howl*'s 'Behind the Microphone' segment both by Simmons herself and also by Pete Docter, the co-

director of the re-dubbed version. Yet these two testimonies appear to be contradictory; whereas Simmons attests to being relatively inexperienced, Docter positions her instead as a seasoned star. In her own words Simmons describes the dubbing process of *Howl* as ‘very new for me, I’ve never done this before. It’s great fun, but it’s [...] tiring I have to admit [...] I’m surprising myself even with the strangest noises that are coming out’ (see (00:04:09 – 00:05:01), ‘Howl’s Moving Castle DVD Extra ~ Behind the Microphone’, 2011). This sentiment seems to directly convey inexperience, especially as regards her statement that animation dubbing is ‘very new for me’. Conversely, Docter positions her as being a star that holds a wealth of experience, commenting that

working with Jean Simmons I was a little scared because of course you know she’s the love interest in *Spartacus*, she’s worked opposite Marlon Brando in *Guys and Dolls* [(Joseph L. Mankiewicz, 1955)] [...] she’s done everything, so I was kind of nervous coming in but she’s so wonderful to work with. (see (00:04:38 – 00:04:54), ‘Howl’s Moving Castle DVD Extra ~ Behind the Microphone’, 2011)

This statement is clearly intended to convey the experience of Simmons, particularly the proclamation that ‘she’s done everything’. Superimposed over the soundbridge of this comment from Docter are archive images from her performances in *Spartacus* (see (00:04:41 – 00:04:44), ‘Howl’s Moving Castle DVD Extra ~ Behind the Microphone’,

2011) and *Guys and Dolls* (see (00:04:44 – 00:04:47), ‘Howl’s Moving Castle DVD Extra ~ Behind the Microphone’, 2011), which act to emphasise this implied experience.

The conclusion that one can draw from these observations is that, in order to be positioned as the seasoned star within the Disney star-pair, one is not necessarily required to be a seasoned *voice* star but rather a seasoned star more generally.

Despite the fact that objectively Bale has more experience with regard to vocal performance and dubbing Disney animations, Simmons is chosen to fulfil the seasoned role because of her star-image recognition, particularly amongst older generations.

Thus, the position of a given star-image within the seasoned-inexperienced star-pair narrative created by Disney does not necessarily reflect the reality of their comparable degrees of experience. That is to say, the star-pairing dynamic is a fabricated themed narrative which only serves to further Disney marketing strategies.

### **RE-DUBBING PONYO**

The first *Ponyo* case-study I have opted to analyse is that of Liam Neeson. Denison writes that ‘the categories of stars employed by Disney [...include] those stars that might fit into ‘cult’ categories’ (2008b:142). Arguably the star-image of Neeson might be classified as a cult star through the manner in which he has constructed his career over time to appeal to fans of the action genre. Many would consider the action genre to apply more to mainstream cinemagoers than cult fandom and yet the case of

Neeson is unique: by predominantly selecting specific roles which adhere to a particular character-image, Neeson has managed to construct a recurring performance across multiple texts. Geraghty observes that

the Hollywood star system was very much associated with personification, with the notion that the stars did not act but were themselves and that the pleasurable recognisable repertoire of gestures, expressions and movements were the property of the star not of any individual character. (2000:190-1)

Through carefully picking his performative parts, Neeson has attempted to achieve success through personification by conflating his star-image with that of a recurring father figure character. He attains this by embodying Geraghty's 'star-as-professional' (2000:189) wherein the star is required to maintain 'a stable star image [...that] often involves the star's identification with a particular genre' (2000:189). Furthermore, she suggests that their role is to provide 'the pleasures of stability and repetition and the guarantee of consistency' (2000:191). The stability and consistency that Neeson represents is the embodiment of a particular character 'function' (Propp, 1958:79): specifically the 'father of kidnapped princesses' (Propp, 1958:70). Although the personification of the father figure within an action context is particularly noticeable in the later career of Neeson, it is still evident in a number of his earlier roles. As Jennifer Wood comments

action-adventure movies were a bit of a staple in Neeson's early career resume [...] he proved that he could wield swords and other weaponry throughout the 1980s in films like John Boorman's *Excalibur* [(1981)], Peter Yates' *Krull* [(1983)] and [...] *Suspect* [(1987)], Roger Donaldson's *The Bounty* [(1984)], Roland Joffé's *The Mission* [(1986)], and Buddy Van Horn's *The Dead Pool* [(1988)]. (2014:1)

Despite these early signs, it was not until Neeson had established himself on the global stage following his Academy Award for Best Actor in *Schindler's List* (Steven Spielberg, 1993) that Neeson was presented with greater freedom to select his roles. Following this feat, Neeson personified the father figure in roles such as Qui-Gon Jinn in *Star Wars: Episode I – The Phantom Menace* (George Lucas, 1999) – in which his character acts as the paternal mentor towards Obi-Wan Kenobi and Anakin Skywalker – and as Ra's Al Ghul in *Batman Begins* in which he occupies a similar role in relation to a fledgling Bruce Wayne. In both films he personifies the father figure function within the narrative. In addition to the popular success of these two mainstream franchises, Neeson then proceeded to enact even more father figures both literal and metaphorical, including, but not limited to: Daniel, the recently bereaved father in *Love Actually* (Richard Curtis, 2003); Aslan – the allegorical character representing Jesus Christ – in *Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (Andrew Adamson, 2005), *Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian* (Andrew Adamson, 2008) and *Chronicles of Narnia: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* (Michael Apted, 2010); his representation of Zeus, the father of the gods, in *Clash of the Titans* (Louis Leterrier, 2010) and *Wrath of the Titans* (Jonathan Liebesman, 2012); and perhaps most

famously in *Taken* (Pierre Morel, 2008), *Taken 2* (Olivier Megaton, 2012) and *Taken 3* (Olivier Megaton, 2014), in which Neeson plays a father whose daughter has been kidnapped. This personification of the father figure is not limited to feature length theatrical releases; he maintains this function across all aspects of his star-image. As such, Neeson also personifies the father figure function by voicing non-filmic characters. In the videogame *Fallout 3* he provides the voice for James – the father of the protagonist – and he also appears as a character named Father Sean in a 2005 episode of *The Simpsons* entitled ‘The Father, The Son, and the Holy Guest Star’. Neither is his personification limited to his audio-visual performances; Neeson is also discussed in popular media in terms of fatherhood, whether that’s in relation to the tragic death of his wife leading to him becoming a single father (Messer, 2014:1), having a premonition about the death of his own father (Maclsaac, 2014:1), or to the extent which Neeson resembles his youngest son (‘Like father, like son: Liam Neeson and youngest boy Daniel look strikingly similar as they attend a New York Knicks game together’, 2014:1).

His character of Fujimoto in *Ponyo* is no exception to this rule and in fact provides an excellent example of such a father figure personification. Mirroring his role in the *Taken* franchise, he once again portrays a father whose daughter goes missing. Fatherhood is critical to this character, as elucidated by Hayao Miyazaki when he describes that ‘Fujimoto was the depiction of our animation director, Katsuya Kondo, who worked right next to me. He had become a new father, so I depicted him as Fujimoto’ (see (00:00:10 – 00:00:25), ‘Ponyo (2008) Featurette’, N.D.). He goes on to

remark that 'Fujimoto wasn't a villain *per se*; the harder a father tries, the more he drives a daughter away' (see (00:00:33 – 00:00:43), 'Ponyo (2008) Featurette', N.D.). In re-dubbing this character, Disney's casting policy was naturally to appoint a star that embodies a father figure of ambiguous morality. Neeson's star-image could then be deployed in the marketing materials to secure the attraction of a cult audience, a demographic which might not have otherwise chosen to consume *Ponyo*. In this sense, the processes of Disneyfication are able to limit their exposure and diversify beyond their primary family demographic.

Using the character of Ponyo as a case-study, the following analysis is a comparison between the casting of the Japanese original and the Disney localized versions, specifically the contrasting star-images of Nara and Cyrus. Due to the inherently limited voiceover experience available when reviewing and casting potential child actors, it can be a beneficial strategy to focus upon young stars that have shown promise through music, television, theatre, advertising or other such media. In the Japanese version of *Ponyo*, Nara was employed to voice the protagonist. Despite a few music, stage and television appearances (see 'Yuria Nara: Official Site', N.D.:1), Nara was hardly a name associated with vocal talent by the time of the film's release in Japan in 2008. Yet Phil Mills believes that Studio Ghibli succeeded in the casting of Ponyo, as he praises 'the vocal talents of Yuria Nara, who seems to suit the visual representation perfectly and sounds exceedingly cute delivering every line' (2008:1). Those producers responsible for the casting policy propagated by Ghibli had to have been mindful that the star-image cast as the child protagonist must not only sound

exceedingly cute but also appear in various promotional materials and paratextual events. I postulate that this interpretation holds the key to appreciating this casting decision; in Nara, Ghibli had found a star-image that could not only adequately perform in the text itself but also aid the promotion of the film by attending premieres and creating ancillary products such as the 'Ghibli Daisuki' album (see 'Nara Yuria Blog', N.D.:1). Adorning the front cover of this latter paratext, one can observe the physicality of Nara as a star-image alongside the Ghibli brand-name, thereby creating a link between the two. For Ghibli and the Japanese promotional campaign, this allows an expression of the star-image whilst simultaneously keeping the focus on the studio's brand-name as the crux of the domestic campaign.

In addition, the star-image of Nara was also included in a DVD special feature sequence, in which one can witness Hayao Miyazaki himself giving specific guidance to Nara as to the intonation of Ponyo's voice during the dubbing process<sup>3</sup>. Due to the non-linguistic nature of the sound being recorded in this clip, one can begin to appreciate the range of sounds employed in the dubbing of an animation. Denison writes that 'voices do not merely speak, they cough, splutter, groan and sing, and each voice is unique to the individual producing it' (2008b:131). I believe that the vocal performance of Nara within this sequence is emphasised in the paratextual materials surrounding *Ponyo* in order to conceal the fact that performing these non-linguistic noises is as close as Nara comes to actual singing in the film. Despite the fact that she

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<sup>3</sup> See (00:18:34 - 00:19:30), *Ponyo sulla scogliera*, [Italian Limited Edition DVD] special feature 'Sessioni Di Doppiaggio'.

does perform '*Gake no Ue no Ponyo*' on her 'Ghibli Daisuki' album released in 2010, Nara did not provide the vocals for the version used in the actual film, which was instead performed by Nozomi Ōhashi and Fujioka Fujimaki (see (00:00:00 – 00:02:46), '01- *Gake no Ue no Ponyo* Gake no Ue no Ponyo [Ponyo on a Cliff]', 2012). By including such paratextual material in DVD special features and also through the later release of the 'Ghibli Daisuki' album which prominently features Nara, Ghibli is able to obscure the fragmentation of Ponyo's character into two star-images, namely Nara and Ōhashi.

For the English language version of *Ponyo*, Disney decided to cast Noah Cyrus, the younger sister of Miley Cyrus, to voice Ponyo, and Frankie Jonas, the younger brother of pop music group The Jonas Brothers, to voice Sōsuke. Cyrus has the benefit of appealing to the child audience through existing associations with the Disney studio as well as through implied connections with her elder sister, pop music star Miley Cyrus. Denison points out that both Cyrus and Jonas are 'younger siblings of stars from the Disney stable' (2011a:224), but what truly sets them apart from Disney's casting policy is their association with the pop music industry. Although by 2008 Cyrus and Jonas had not accrued massive musical success, they had made numerous television appearances through connections with their family members: Jonas had appeared in 12 episodes of *Jonas* (2009-2010) with his elder brothers and Cyrus appeared in 6 episodes of *Doc* (2003-2004) alongside her musician father, Billy Ray Cyrus. Moreover, it is my position that the star-images of both Cyrus and Jonas are affected not only by the appearances that they themselves have made, but also by the performances and star-images of their more renowned family members. That is, Disney constructed a themed narrative

around the casting of Cyrus and Jonas which centres upon an inherited star-image signification and a Disney stable pop-music connotation. Within the 'Behind the Scenes' promotional material on the Disney DVD release of *Ponyo*, producer Kathleen Kennedy validates this position by commenting that

the casting of the dub version was actually incredibly fun. Our daughter, Megan, who's ten years old, said 'well you know Miley Cyrus has a sister, and she's really talented, and her name is Noah', and she said 'the Jonas brothers have a brother named Frankie, and Frankie and Noah they're the same age'. And we just looked at each other and said 'oh my God, this is perfect!' (see (00:01:19 00:01:42), 'HQ: PONYO (2009) - behind the scenes', 2009)

Regarding the Cyrus vocal performance in *Ponyo*, a deal of emphasis was placed on the fact that Cyrus and Jonas recorded the English language version of '*Gake no Ue no Ponyo*'. With the aid of Joe Hisaishi, the original composer of the Japanese version of the song, this rendition includes not only a straightforward cover version of the original Japanese song (see (00:00:00 – 00:01:33), 'Ponyo on the Cliff by the Sea - Theme Song (English)', 2010), but also an auto-tuned pop music remix version (see (00:01:33 – 00:03:01), 'Ponyo on the Cliff by the Sea - Theme Song (English)', 2010), both of which play over the closing sequence of the film itself. In this instance the American vocal performers, no doubt influenced by their older pop music star siblings, have inflected the Disney version of *Ponyo* with aspects from within their own star-

images. In addition, not only has the Cyrus-Jonas pop music remix affected the atmosphere of *Ponyo's* credit sequence, but footage of them recording the remixed track features as further paratextual marketing material on the Disney DVD (see (00:00:00 – 00:01:23), 'Ponyo B Roll', 2009).

By taking a purely textual approach to contrasting casting policies for the character of Ponyo, one can conclude from this commutation test that Ghibli opted for a versatile star with experience in music, theatre and television that would be able to promote *Ponyo* on multiple fronts. Disney decided to cast a less experienced star with a strong marketable star-image attained through celebrity family members that would be more recognisable to child audiences. It is only through analysing paratextual material, particularly DVD special features from both the Japanese and American versions, that one is permitted a rare insight into the intricacies of the dubbing process. In comparison, the visible glimpses permitted of the Disney marketing mechanism appear to show a more deliberate approach to casting, with the overriding concern being the application of a themed narrative.

As demonstrated above, Neeson and Cyrus were cast in order to appeal to an adult, cult, action audience and a child, Disney, pop music audience respectively. As Denison records in her second possibility, star-clusters provide the film with 'variant audience appeals' (2008b:141). In this context, analysing Neeson and Cyrus in a vacuum is not beneficial and instead this star-pair should be considered as part of *Ponyo's* wider star-cluster. On this topic, Denison goes on to remark that

the categories of stars employed by Disney [... include] young and youth market oriented film and television stars from Daveigh Chase to Van Der Beek and Dunst. Likewise, it includes those stars that might fit into 'cult' categories, for example, Gillian Anderson, Stewart and Thurman. Finally, there is a healthy trend in using established film and television acting 'legends', particularly women, such as Bacall and Leachman, but also Suzanne Pleshette (Yubaba and Zeniba in *Spirited Away*) and Jean Simmons and Blythe Danner (playing Old Sofi and Madam Suliman respectively in *Howl's Moving Castle*). (2008b:142)

That is to say that each of the stars which Disney casts to voice Ghibli characters bring variant audience appeals to the project in question. The argument above discusses that Neeson satisfies the cult criteria and Cyrus appeals to the youth demographic. In *Ponyo*, a wide variety of star-images combined to form a star-cluster which was advertised within theatrical trailers and other promotional material surrounding the film's release. Indeed, a title card featuring in the primary Anglophone trailer analysed in this thesis (see 'Chapter Five – Promotion: Disneyfying the Paratext') proudly advertises that the Disney re-dub features the voices of Cate Blanchett, Noah Cyrus, Matt Damon, Tina Fey, Frankie Jonas, Cloris Leachman, Liam Neeson, Lily Tomlin and Betty White (see (00:02:10 – 00:02:13), 'Ponyo Official English Language Trailer', 2009).

Each of the star-images listed above serves a specific purpose with regard to attracting variant audience appeal centred around categories such as both the age and the medium of the star-image in question (Denison, 2011a:224). More mature stars such as Cloris Leachman, Lily Tomlin and Betty White might be classified as legend stars. Yet each of these legends will inflect a specific angle on this category that will attract different target audiences. White appeals to an audience more familiar with television, as her star-image is heavily associated with her seven Emmy awards as well as popular series like *The Golden Girls* (1985 – 1992) and *Mary Tyler Moore* (1973 – 1977). Leachman acts as the seasoned legend since she has considerable experience as a voice actor, having worked on projects like *The Iron Giant* (Brad Bird, 1999) and the earlier Ghibli text *Laputa: Castle in the Sky*. Tomlin appeals more directly to the American audience because she has appeared in films associated with country music, such as *Nine to Five* (Colin Higgins, 1980) and *Nashville* (Robert Altman, 1975).

In addition to these niche variant audience appeals, stars such as Tina Fey, Matt Damon and Cate Blanchett have broader appeal, satisfying a more populist demographic, with each accenting the category with different nuances. Fey could be considered as a mainstream market oriented star by addressing a market more familiar with American television which might recognise her from comedies like *30 Rock* (2006 – 2013) and *Saturday Night Live* (1975 – present). Damon is also a mainstream market oriented star, but his strengths stem from feature-length films such as *The Bourne Identity* (Doug Liman, 2002) and *The Departed* (Martin Scorsese, 2006). Finally, Blanchett also appeals to a broad cinemagoing audience, but her star-image is more

closely associated with 'independent' (Wyatt, 1998; Perren, 2001; Biskind, 2004), yet successful, productions like *Babel* (Alejandro González Iñárritu, 2006) or *The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou* (Wes Anderson, 2004). In this way, one can observe how Disney has constructed this star-cluster to appeal not only to cult, youth-oriented, mature, mainstream and independent audiences, but also both the television and cinemagoing demographics (Denison, 2011a:224).

It should be noted here that the star-cluster deployed by Disney as laid out above does not comprise the total extent of vocal performance in *Ponyo*, but can instead be understood as those star-images which are to be emphasised in the promotional stage. Three star-images in particular – Jennessa Rose, Marsha Clark and Colleen O'Shaughnessey – vocalise, and are credited for, three named characters within the re-dub – Kumiko, Noriko and Karen – all of which are arguably roles of importance to *Ponyo's* narrative. Yet because these star-images are generally associated with vocal performance in both the videogame and animation industries rather than mainstream live-action audio-visual roles, these star-images are denied a position within the Disneyfication modes of delivery because they cannot be 'used to sell' (Denison, 2008b:144). In other words, because these three star-images do not contribute to the variant audience appeal of *Ponyo's* promotional strategy, their input is deemphasised within the paratextuality of Disney. Each star-image which has been selected for emphasis within the star-cluster is specifically utilised in order to attract the widest possible audience. In the case of *Ponyo*, the casting policy and marketing strategies employed by Disney tend to focus more on the star-cluster model rather than limiting

themselves to a star-pair, even though several of the parts played by the star-images in the star-cluster listed above are relatively small. I suggest that *Ponyo* required the star-cluster model because of the child oriented nature of its narrative and original target audience; that is to say that in order to attract more mature audiences to the film Disney had to cast star-images familiar to an adult audience.

### **RE-DUBBING THE WIND RISES**

I would argue that the cast for *Wind* was, perhaps more than any other Ghibli film, meticulously chosen. At this juncture, I should indicate that I am aware that Disney was not wholly responsible for the dub, as their influence was tempered by both their own adult-oriented Touchstone Pictures label and oversight from Studio Ghibli itself. The re-dub was undertaken primarily through the efforts of two Americans: producer Geoffrey Wexler, the International Division Chief at Studio Ghibli and a former Disney executive and director Gary Rydstrom, who has previously worked on Pixar films such as *Toy Story* (John Lasseter, 1995) and *Brave* (Mark Andrews, Brenda Chapman and Steve Purcell, 2012) and, perhaps more importantly, has enjoyed a career as a well-respected sound designer on a number of Hollywood blockbusters, including *Saving Private Ryan* (Steven Spielberg, 1998) and *Jurassic Park* (Steven Spielberg, 1993). Thus, whilst strictly speaking *Wind* is not entirely a Disney re-dub, it is a re-production helmed by experienced professionals who are extremely familiar with Disney's casting policy and therefore, as a set of processes, Disneyfication can still be observed.

The reason that the casting policy for this particular text had to be perfectly managed by Studio Ghibli rather than Disney was the more mature nature of the narrative itself. Previous Hayao Miyazaki films had certainly contained content that was more applicable to an adult audience – notably the overt themes of violence and environmentalism present in, for example, *Princess Mononoke*. Yet most of these texts also contained other narratives that were more familiar to the child audience: stories of growing up and transformation; adventure and the prospect of leaving home; as well as connecting to a parallel mythical and spiritual world. As such, Hayao Miyazaki films often held enough plot devices for child audiences to follow the overall story of the film without necessarily grasping the meaning of the more mature elements within the narrative.

*Wind* departs from this tradition by being relatively impenetrable to younger audiences for several reasons. Due to its interwar historical setting, the subject matter itself deals with complex socio-political concerns held by the Japanese populace as well as drawing upon international relations between the nations that would later form the Axis alliance. Yet the actual physicality of combat – the parts of war stories that children can at least partially relate to – is notably absent from the film. Wexler comments that with *Wind* ‘Miyazaki wasn't out to show war’ (quoted in Thompson, 2013:1). In addition to the temporality of the narrative, perhaps more so than any other Hayao Miyazaki film to date, the storytelling style is meanderingly slow and pensive, with the frame often lingering on aesthetically pleasing details in the scenery rather than hurriedly attempting to progress the plot. Wexler comments that

[m]ost of Miyazaki's films take place in a very short period of time. It could be a day; it could be several days. Our founding producer, Toshio Suzuki, challenged Miyazaki to make a film that takes place over a much longer period of time. The second to last scene in the film is 1935, and the last scene is 1945 and there is nothing shown in between. (quoted in Thompson, 2013:1)

I argue that the above observation confirms the adult nature of the target audience. In order to suture together a slow-moving historical narrative absent of violence which covers such a long period of time, the consumer would need to make advanced connections between complex frames of reference.

As noted earlier, the American versions of the two previous Ghibli films analysed in this study had thus far been targeted at the family demographic. That is to say, appealing equally to both child and adult audiences. The original Japanese language version of *Wind* does not fit neatly into this model and required careful re-casting to maintain the desired target audience. Wexler comments on the localization of *Wind* stating, seemingly paradoxically, that

I tend to think of it as family fare. This film is definitely not aimed at kids.

Miyazaki wanted to make the film he wanted to make. It's a real departure for

him. One of the things that's interesting about this film is that there is a male hero, instead of a little girl from 7 to 14 or 15. (quoted in Thompson, 2013:1)

One might quite reasonably ask how a text can be described as 'family fare' whilst simultaneously being 'definitely not aimed at kids' and the answer lies in redefining what is meant by 'family'. Wexler specifically comments on the lack of a 7 – 15 year old female protagonist and I argue that this observation indicates that the Western localization team considered this approximately aged audience to be uninterested in *Wind*. Put another way, they considered it unwise to target *Wind* at a child or preteen audience, and instead focused on the young adult and adult age brackets. The film is described as family fare in order to attract as wide an audience as possible, but what is implied by family in this context is a more mature familial grouping.

This approach is strongly reflected in the casting choice for *Wind*; the Western localization team chose to cast Emily Blunt as Nahoko, Stanley Tucci as Caproni and John Krasinski as Honjō. This star-cluster represents a real life familial group, as Blunt and Krasinski are married and Tucci is wed to Emily Blunt's sister, literary agent Felicity Blunt. In video interviews with the Hollywood cast released online by Disney, Blunt explains that Jirō has an 'imaginary muse [...] this Italian aircraft designer Caproni, played by my brother-in-law Stanley Tucci, and his friend Honjō, played by my husband, John Krasinski, so it's a very family affair you see' (see (00:02:03 – 00:02:17), 'THE WIND RISES English Dub Interview: Emily Blunt (Nahoko Satomi)', 2014). Krasinski elaborates upon this opinion in his own interview, reiterating that

this is a family affair [...] it's like the Von Trapp family doing a movie together  
[...] I did this movie with my wife which was awesome [...] it's definitely the first  
thing we've done together [...] on top of that [...] Stanley Tucci was in the movie  
and he is now my new brother-in-law. (see (00:03:18 – 00:03:55), 'THE WIND  
RISES English Dub Interview: John Krasinski (Honjo)', 2014)

Analysing these complementary statements for a moment, one can describe some interesting developments on the casting policy for *Wind*. Most noticeably, the phrase 'family affair' is repeated and emphasised, which echoes the description from Wexler of the re-dub as being 'family fare'. These two proclamations approach the same conclusion from opposing positions: the producer's description of *Wind* as 'family fare' (my emphasis) stresses the film as a commodified entertainment product suitable for all age groups; whilst the portrayal of *Wind* as a 'family affair' (my emphasis) endeavours to highlight the casual nature of the localization process by deemphasising the site of labour, or as Barry King writes, the attempt to 're-site the signification of interiority, away from the actor and onto the mechanism' (1991:180). The phonetic similarity between these two positions and their deployment throughout the Western marketing strategy by both producers and stars indicates that the localization casting policy for *Wind* was constructed in order to apply the themed narrative of mature, family-friendly entertainment in an attempt to maximise the potential sales demographic of the film.

However, it is not solely the star-images of Blunt, Tucci and Krasinski that are responsible for re-branding *Wind* as suitable for a family audience. I argue that this transition is in part aided by the casting of Joseph Gordon-Levitt, who was specifically chosen to appeal to audiences of varying ages. Before any further analysis is possible, it is first necessary to briefly outline the trajectory of the star-image of Gordon-Levitt and perhaps more importantly his public reflections regarding his own *oeuvre*. Gordon-Levitt has had a lengthy acting career spanning twenty-six years with his first role in *Stranger on My Land* (Larry Elikann, 1988) occurring when he was just six years old. Over the years he appeared in various roles, such as in the television series *Dark Shadows* (1991) and the film *Angels in the Outfield* (William Dear, 1994), but his first major breakthrough performance was the hit television series *3<sup>rd</sup> Rock from the Sun* (1996 – 2001). Gordon-Levitt goes on to say that ‘I played baseball, did gymnastics, took piano lessons and started acting as just another one of the things I did. I wasn’t pressured into it. But it was acting I loved’ (quoted in Rebello, 2012:1). Here, one can observe a star obscuring the site of labour, or re-siting the signification of interiority. In this instance, I argue that Gordon-Levitt is distancing himself from his child star days and instead attempting to normalise the act as another childhood hobby. In particular, he appears to re-site the signification of interiority towards his parents by attributing his early success to their *laissez-faire* attitude, stating that

you hear stories, many of which are unfortunately true, about parents sort of pressuring their kids into doing this stuff and that was never the case with me. I always just really liked doing it. My parents always said ‘you don’t have to do

this, you can quit whenever you want to [...] quit'. (see (00:00:41 00:00:57),  
'Joseph Gordon-Levitt discusses career and acting', 2011)

In a later interview, he continues that 'I wouldn't say I was a normal kid [...] because unfortunately it's not normal to have extraordinarily good parents who love and support you' (quoted in Rebello, 2012:1). I argue that this attitude towards childhood seems to signify not that his early career can be entirely attributed to his parents' good nature, but rather that Gordon-Levitt is obscuring the site of labour by replacing the connotations of being ambitious and hard-working with a themed narrative suggestive of childhood enjoyment and innocent pleasure. On the odd occasion when he does refer to acting as labour, he represents the process as tranquil and straight-forward, notably his recollection that 'I had a really cool acting teacher who taught us how to become a character, to be realistic and feel those feelings' (quoted in Rebello, 2012:1). Here, although the site of labour is hinted at, the actual work involved is intentionally understated, leading to a positive conceptualisation of Disneyfied performative labour.

After garnering fame as a child star, Gordon-Levitt took a brief break from his performative career. As Jeff Gordinier notes

Joe [...] stopped acting for a couple of years and finally emerged to launch what looks now, in retrospect, like a slow, smart, sustained campaign of reinvention.

He gravitated toward Sundance films with the grit to scrape off layers of sitcom gloss. (2010:2)

Gordon-Levitt embarked upon this reinvention period in an effort to distance himself from the association with his child star roles. He began to appear in critically-acclaimed independent features such as *Mysterious Skin* (Gregg Araki, 2004), *Brick* (Rian Johnson, 2005) and *(500) Days of Summer* (Marc Webb, 2009). Around approximately 2009, Gordon-Levitt began to reappear in more mainstream roles such as within *G.I. Joe: The Rise of Cobra* (Stephen Sommers, 2009), *Inception* (Christopher Nolan, 2010) and *The Dark Knight Rises*. However, his independent signification had not entirely dissipated and he continued to amass acclaim by performing in less mainstream roles such as *50 / 50* (Jonathan Levine, 2011) and *Premium Rush* (David Koepp, 2012). The mainstream and independent aspects of the career of Gordon-Levitt coalesced into a cohesive, adult-oriented star-image during the production of his directorial debut *Don Jon* (Joseph Gordon-Levitt, 2013), his most recent appearance before his vocal performance in *Wind*. Here, he displayed his independent authorial flair by directing, writing and starring in the film, as well as outsourcing elements of the production to hitRECORD, the collaborative network that he had founded in 2005. Yet the film remained partially entrenched in the mainstream through the other entities involved in its co-production such as Voltage Pictures, the production company behind successful films like *The Hurt Locker* (Kathryn Bigelow, 2008), as well as Hollywood A-list stars that appeared alongside Gordon-Levitt, including Scarlett Johansson and

Julianne Moore. Perhaps more pertinently, *Don Jon* is a film firmly positioned towards the adult-oriented market due to its sexually explicit theming and subject matter.

All of which is to say that, by the time of re-dubbing *Wind*, Gordon-Levitt had contained within his star-image elements of childhood, adulthood, independent significations. Yet Gordon-Levitt continues to be portrayed by both the media and academia in terms recalling his childhood career. Gordinier goes as far as to label Gordon-Levitt as ‘an overgrown kid who just got off his 17th spin on Space Mountain’ (2010:1), going on to note that he ‘is so shiny and childlike’ (2010:1). Miller and Rode, in their discussion of Disney audiences referenced earlier, posit the importance of the ‘adult-child’ audience as part of Disney’s family demographic, describing such consumers as the “‘kid in me” who desires happy resolutions that Disney films create and exploit, to our benefit and detriment.’ (1995:87) It is this aspect of the Disney family audience to whom Gordon-Levitt appeals: those consumers transitioning between childhood and adulthood.

In his informative scholarly article ‘Movies for Hipsters’, Michael Newman describes his character within *(500) Days of Summer* as ‘childlike’ (2013:76), elaborating that, in conjunction with his co-star Zooey Deschanel, the film depicts idealised ‘twentysomething [...] boy-meets-girl roles [...] via] their romp through the showrooms of IKEA presented as playing house [...] though the film generally represents them as mature adults with jobs and apartments and grown-up ambitions’ (2013:76). This jarring duality between the childlike behaviour of playing house and the more mature

adult comportment of maintaining jobs and apartments is evident throughout several of his later roles, noticeably within both *50 / 50* – during which the seriousness of a cancer diagnosis is allayed by the comedic antics undertaken with co-star Seth Rogen – and *Premium Rush* – in which the grave issues of illegal immigration, gang warfare and corrupt police officers are mitigated by the excitement of cycling through the city without the use of brakes. Newman categorises this pattern of portrayal as indicative of

[c]ountercultures [...] of liminal post-adolescents, between child and adult identities, struggling to negotiate a place in society distinct from their parents' culture without duplicating its ideological failures. In indie hipster culture, the prolongation of childhood, the unsentimental preservation of its style and ethos, is a way of perpetuating the consumer identities of youth into adulthood. (2013:76)

The concept of the 'liminal post-adolescent' is critical to understanding the particular audience appeal of Gordon-Levitt. As noted above, within individual texts one can observe Gordon-Levitt embodying post-adolescent characteristics which contain elements that directly appeal to both child and adult target audiences. Additionally, when appraising his *oeuvre* as a whole the earlier texts enthrall younger target audiences and the more post-adolescent performances he has portrayed as he has grown older manage to appeal to audiences of all ages. I argue that this element of

post-adolescent appeal is critical to the decision to cast him as the protagonist in the localization of *Wind*. Rydstrom, the director of the English language re-dubbed version, explains the casting decision in his statement that

the character had to be smart and sincere and in love [...] Joseph Gordon-Levitt is a very intelligent actor, can play very intelligent characters but he's also [...] a leading man, he's someone you want to see fall in love, so I think he brings the romance and the intellect to the part. (see (00:04:22 – 00:04:51), 'THE WIND RISES English Dub Interview: Director Gary Rydstrom (Part 1)', 2014)

This dramatic range allowed Gordon-Levitt to accrue respect not only amongst industrial producers but also amongst his fellow actors, a performative labour which aids the Disneyfication of *Wind's* paratextuality. Krasinski, in his promotional *Wind* interview, describes Gordon-Levitt as

one of the best actors working, period [...] he's pretty fearless and he does things on his own terms and the way he wants to do them [...] he's never allowed any movie or group of people to push him to do a certain character and repeat that character, he's always trying to reinvent himself. (see (00:02:27 – 00:02:59), 'THE WIND RISES English Dub Interview: John Krasinski (Honjo)', 2014)

William H. Macy, a co-star in *Wind*, proclaims admiration for Gordon-Levitt in his video interview released by Disney, commenting that 'I love what he's done with his career [...] he was very young when he started making films and he's done this great transition to being this hunk. It's really good what he's done, I really appreciate this actor' (see (00:02:07 – 00:02:20), 'THE WIND RISES English Dub Interview: William H. Macy (Satomi)', 2014). This testimonial hints at the secret behind the re-branding of Gordon-Levitt as a post-adolescent hunk: the transformation proved to be successful not *despite* his early career as a child star but precisely *because* of this background that he is able to attract the twentysomething audiences. In Gordon-Levitt, the Western localization team had found the perfect candidate for re-branding *Wind* as particular broad family fare in order to achieve the highest possible sales. By casting the star-image of a former child-actor who had transitioned into a post-adolescent romantic lead, *Wind* was able to appeal to a wide array of audiences.

Discussed in isolation, one can begin to understand how Blunt and Gordon-Levitt proved to be indispensable to the familial centred Western casting policy for *Wind*. Yet a further analysis of how the star-pair interacted with one another can deconstruct Denison's conjecture that Disney has a tendency to pair a seasoned performer with a less experienced actor. I posit that the level of experience that each star brings to each project is, to some extent, subjective and that far more important is the *appearance* of experience, as demonstrated in the above example with Bale and Simmons in *Howl*. First, let us examine the vocal performance that both Blunt and Gordon-Levitt possessed before the production of *Wind*. As Jim Hill notes, Gordon-Levitt had

previously lent his voice towards the Disney animation *Treasure Planet* (Ron Clements and John Musker, 2002) as well as through his reprisal of the Cobra Commander role within the videogame *G.I. Joe: The Rise of Cobra* (Electronic Arts, 2009) (2014:1). By contrast, Blunt had performed vocally in a single episode of *The Simpsons* broadcast in 2009 and the Disney financed animation produced by Rocket Pictures, *Gnomeo and Juliet* (Kelly Asbury, 2011). By comparing the experience of these two stars, one does not find a vast disparity between the degrees of their involvement in voice acting prior to *Wind*.

Yet if we look at the marketing materials provided by the stars themselves, one can observe the same dichotomy that Denison notes. The video interviews with Blunt and Gordon-Levitt released by Disney appear to suggest that one of them is more seasoned than the other, despite the fact that neither one of them holds significantly more experience. On the topic of his own performance in *Wind*, Gordon-Levitt remarks that

when you're recording the English-language version of a Japanese movie, getting things to sync up properly with the already-finished animation can sometimes be tricky. First and foremost, you always want to make sure that you're getting the underlying emotion of each scene across [...] but at the same time, you also have to make sure that the dialogue that's been written for the English translation of this film actually matches up with the animation up there on screen. Which can often be quite challenging. But I find that -- when you insert a technical challenge like this into the creative process -- you often

inspire unexpected creative choices which can then be quite cool. (quoted in Hill, 2014:1)

I argue that this response from Gordon-Levitt implicitly relates to the seasoned-inexperienced dichotomy. By using terms such as 'tricky' and 'technical' to refer to being seasoned and then words like 'emotion' and 'unexpected' to imply inexperience, Gordon-Levitt is able to express his own relative inexperience in vocal performance without overtly stating the matter. A similar process occurs when Blunt discusses her performance in *Wind* in relation to her previous vocal experience, commenting that

this one's a little more challenging because you're adapting to a character that's already there, and I've done animated movies before but you record the voice and then they match to you [...] but what I found actually really thrilling about it and more helpful than usual is that you get a real sense of what the scene is asking of you, and so actually I ended up finding it a lot easier in some ways because you get a sense of what film you're in. (see (00:05:22 – 00:05:59), 'THE WIND RISES English Dub Interview: Emily Blunt (Nahoko Satomi)', 2014)

Once more we see a similar code in the choice of wording, wherein 'challenging' equates to the seasoned star and 'thrilling' and 'helpful' relates to being inexperienced. If we are to compare both of the above comments one would expect both stars to be relatively inexperienced, with perhaps a slight weighting in favour of

Blunt as she has 'done animated movies before'. However, if one were to accept this conclusion, the concept of pairing seasoned and inexperienced stars together is seemingly negated. Instead, one needs to find stronger evidence of such a themed narrative elsewhere.

Both of the above comments indicate that remarks made by the stars concerning their own level of perceptible talent are understandably guarded and complex. This is due to the fact that, should they give honest and straightforward responses, they would not only appear to be either too modest or too arrogant, but they would also unnecessarily draw attention to the site of their own labour. A more useful approach to examining the star-pair relationship can be found in the discussion of each other's contributions towards the film as this allows them to 're-site the signification of interiority, away from the actor and onto the mechanism' (King, 1991:180). In this manner, the stars can disseminate the seasoned-inexperienced pair narrative whilst at the same time conceal the site of their labour. In his interview, Gordon-Levitt comments that

Emily's really good at this movie because [...] she's very technically adept and that's what this process takes, because you're going line by line and trying to fit a very limited amount of time that matches to the Japanese, it's a very technical process. (see (00:03:56 – 00:04:20), 'The Wind Rises Interview - Joseph Gordon-Levitt (2014) - Studio Ghibli Movie HD', 2014)

In this segment, similar coded vocabulary is used in which ‘technical’ and ‘adept’ signify the seasoned star. This type of language indicates that Gordon-Levitt is positioning Blunt as the seasoned star within the star-pair and himself as the relatively inexperienced star. Correspondingly, Blunt states that

There’s a sort of buoyancy and a youth to Joe and he is someone who thinks outside of the box and carves out new space for himself all the time and so he’s got the right spirit and character to play someone as inventive and entrepreneurial as Jirō. (see (00:04:28 – 00:04:48), ‘THE WIND RISES English Dub Interview: Emily Blunt (Nahoko Satomi)’, 2014)

Terms such as ‘buoyancy’, ‘youth’ and ‘spirit’ reaffirm that Gordon-Levitt occupies the inexperienced role in comparison to the more seasoned position of Blunt. Whether or not Gordon-Levitt and Blunt actually believes this state of affairs to be the case is immaterial; all that is required is their participation in the construction of this narrative in the paratextual materials surrounding the film. In fact according to Rydstrom the stars did not personally witness each other’s vocal recording sessions, as he remarks that the actors are ‘all coming in individually to make it even harder; they’re not reacting to each other because they come in at different times’ (see (00:05:05 – 00:05:10), ‘THE WIND RISES English Dub Interview: Director Gary Rydstrom (Part 1)’, 2014). Regardless of the truth of such a relationship dynamic, both of the above comments appear to corroborate the Disneyfied application of a seasoned-inexperienced themed narrative.

In summation of the three case studies analysed above, two critical conclusions may be drawn. Firstly, the target audience of the Disney re-dubbed versions of Ghibli products fluctuates depending on the narrative and content of the film in question. *Howl* targets a broad audience which includes elderly consumers due to the prominence of Grandma Sophie's character; *Ponyo* is targeted more specifically at a child audience due to the extremely young age of the protagonists and Disney actively had to attract an adult audience through casting stars like Neeson; whilst *Wind* is aimed at a much older audience due to the seriousness of the subject matter and as a result the glocalization team resorted to connecting the film with the concept of family via paratextual material. Disney prefers to target the family market in particular and when presented with unconventional material attempts to redefine precisely what is meant by family. Secondly, that anachronistic interpretations of a given star-image aid the processes of Disneyfication through hybrid consumption and the separation of the Disney narrative and the Disney text. In *Howl*, the later role of Bale as Batman inflects his delivery of Howl's voice and the foreknowledge of the demise of Simmons encourages a revisionist inflection of her portrayal of Grandma Sophie. In *Ponyo*, the recent controversial actions of Miley Cyrus in the television and music industries has to some extent complicated the 'Cyrus' star-image. In *Wind*, the fact that Blunt and Krasinski recently started a family (Eggenberger, 2014:1) strengthens but also ages the association of family with her star-image. Evidently these examples prove that stardom *within the context of Disneyfication* is not a static concept cemented at the moment when a text is produced and should instead be considered as a *process* which continuously evolves over time.

Having established these six case-studies regarding Disney's casting policy towards re-dubbed 'star-spangled Japanese-American co-productions', one must at this point temporarily pause the process of analysis. Before moving on to examine in-depth how the six star-images are actually utilised in the promotional material, one must first turn to the brand-names of the auteur-stars and author functions that are involved in the production of these three texts. Because the star-image and the authorial brand-name are often deployed in conjunction with one another, this thesis will first examine theories of authorship and how they apply to *Howl*, *Ponyo* and *Wind* in 'Chapter Four – Authorship: Auteur-Stars and Author Functions' in order to conduct a successful analysis of their effect within promotional paratexts, as shall be demonstrated in 'Chapter Five – Promotion: Disneyfying the Paratext'.

## **CHAPTER FOUR – AUTHORSHIP:**

### **AUTEUR-STARS AND AUTHOR FUNCTIONS**

#### **BRANDING HAYAO MIYAZAKI**

Hayao Miyazaki clearly contributes a huge amount to the success of Studio Ghibli products. As one of the studio's founding members and the director (and often writer) of the most commercially successful Ghibli films to date, his influence as an author cannot be understated. More than that, his brand-name is associated with the staggering success he has achieved over his career. As Denison points out, 'Miyazaki is probably the best-known and best-regarded Japanese animator in the world' (2007:308). In 2014 Hayao Miyazaki was awarded the Academy Honorary Award by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. Prior to accepting the award, he was introduced by John Lasseter, who summarised the phenomenal achievements of Hayao Miyazaki in a financial context, stating that

four of his films rank among the top ten highest grossing feature films of all time in Japan – that's not just animated films, but all films – which includes the Academy Award winning *Spirited Away*, the highest grossing film of all time in Japan. (see (00:00:48 - 00:01:07), 'John Lasseter honors Hayao Miyazaki at the 2014 Governors Awards', 2014)

Clearly, Hayao Miyazaki has proved to be a massive commercial success in his domestic market. John Lasseter goes on to comment that 'Miyazaki-san has directed eleven feature films, more than any other animation director in history' (see (00:03:59 – 00:04:05), 'John Lasseter honors Hayao Miyazaki at the 2014 Governors Awards', 2014). This brief introduction to Miyazaki emphasises those aspects of his brand-name which are useful for the purposes of Disneyfication: an economically successful yet historically prolific artist. That is to say, the processes of Disneyfication require Miyazaki to fulfil the classic auteur-star function as it is commonly understood in scholarly circles (Sarris, 1962).

Academia to date has often focused on the auteur-star impact of Hayao Miyazaki in a textual sense, concentrating primarily on 'narrative and genre, visual style and formal approaches, and thematic elements' (Moist and Bartholow, 2007:32-33). Certainly his canon can be said to contain similar motifs from text to text; for example, Napier writes that his *oeuvre* is characterised by 'trademark images of flying machines, soaring clouds, and supernatural creatures' (2005:152). Moist and Bartholow add to this list, noting that the films of Hayao Miyazaki also include: an insistence upon hand-drawing key frames, a consideration of depth of field, attention to detail, a tendency towards young female protagonists, the use of pigs as character metaphors, a concern with the role of an individual within a society and the discussion of global issues like war, politics and ecology as subtext (2007:30-39). As enlightening as these discussions have been, I argue that there is room for further debate concerning the Hayao Miyazaki persona rather than outlining the common elements present in his films.

Instead of examining the inquiry ‘what is Miyazaki’s vision?’ (Napier, 2005:153), I choose instead to explore the *paratextual function* of the Hayao Miyazaki brand-name in terms of the values associated specifically with this auteur-star. In other words, rather than marvel at the director’s ‘agenda that is expressed not only in terms of narrative and characters but also through his extraordinary animation’ (Napier, 2005:153), this analysis will focus on the paratextual actions of Hayao Miyazaki himself when in the public sphere.

One of the most surprising characteristics of Hayao Miyazaki as a spokesperson is his tendency to become socio-politically involved in current affairs. Whether or not a given comment is warranted for the particular situation is inconsequential, the fact remains that many of his public addresses have been commandeered to comment upon socio-political issues rather than his own *oeuvre*. Following the news that Hayao Miyazaki had received the 75<sup>th</sup> Academy Award for Best Animated Feature Film in 2003, the director chose not to attend the awards ceremony. Instead, he issued the following handwritten statement:

*The world currently faces a very unfortunate situation*, and I am therefore sorry that I cannot experience the full joy of receiving this award. However, I am deeply grateful to all my friends for the efforts they have made so that *Spirited Away* could be shown in America, and also to all those who rated my film so highly. (Miyazaki, 2014:292, my emphasis)

At the time the 'very unfortunate situation' remained ambiguous and Hayao Miyazaki would not elaborate upon the issue any further. However, speaking with press at San Diego Comic Con in 2009, he revised this position. He explicitly clarified that his absence during the Academy Award ceremony was a protest against warfare, stating that 'the reason I wasn't here for the Academy Award was because I didn't want to visit a country that was bombing Iraq [...] at the time, my producer shut me up and did not allow me to say that' (Miyazaki quoted in Pham, 2009:1). Despite being temporarily censored by Toshio Suzuki, Hayao Miyazaki used the platform of the Academy Awards to preach his pacifist position. A very similar incident occurred recently; upon collecting the aforementioned accolade at the Governor's Award ceremony, Hayao Miyazaki elected to use his speech to critique not so subtly American involvement in recent global conflicts. Speaking through the translator Beth Cary, the entire speech given by Hayao Miyazaki was delivered as follows:

my wife tells me that I'm a very lucky man. And I think I've been lucky because I've been able to participate in the last time, the last era, when we can make films with paper, pencil and film. *Another fact of luck is that my country has not been at war for the fifty years that I have been making films. Of course we have profited from wars, but we are very fortunate that we have not had to go to war ourselves.* But my greatest luck is that I've been able to meet Miss Maureen O'Hara today. So I've been so happy and feel so blessed with luck in

my life. Thank you. (see (00:00:25 – 00:02:30), ‘Hayao Miyazaki receives an Honorary Award at the 2014 Governors Awards’, 2014, my emphasis)

Although this example is less explicit than previous statements, the fact that it occurred in 2014 well after the global release of *Wind* – which at the time was positioned as the director’s final film – indicates that Hayao Miyazaki intends to continue to wield the socio-political power of his brand-name as a platform for advocating pacifism. In a related event, following the Fukushima disaster of 2011, Hayao Miyazaki used his brand-name – reinforced by the paratextual physicality of the Hayao Miyazaki author-image – to condemn all attempts to harness nuclear energy, appearing on the front cover of *Neppuu* and bearing a sign that reads ‘no nuclear power supply’ (see *Neppuu*, 2011:1).

This paratextual performative labour from Hayao Miyazaki demonstrates that the Japanese director is, at least partially, not simply an author but an auteur-star whose brand-name can be emphasised through physicality. In this case in particular, Hayao Miyazaki is explicitly utilising the intellectual weight of his brand-name to discuss modern-day, political issues. Yet in all of these cases, Hayao Miyazaki is using the influence of his brand-name in order to focus on his ‘leftist’ (Kelts, 2013:1) socio-political beliefs concerning current affairs. At first glance it might appear that such a clear political stance works against the commercial incentives of Disneyfication, but, carefully cultivated, these interpretations serve to fortify the classical auteur-star perspective as propagated by anime academia. The effect of this trend is to add an

intellectual themed narrative to the filmic canon directed by Hayao Miyazaki in the sense that being outspoken on socio-political issues may arguably attract a more cultured, informed and older audience, which, in turn, aids in the legitimisation of the Ghibli *oeuvre* as more than cartoons aimed at children. That is to say, whilst Ghibli texts are transformed on a paratextual level into the Disneyfied systemscape of the cartoon medium-genre to appeal to the majority, references to Hayao Miyazaki's auteur-star brand-name appeal to a more niche audience who is attracted by anime's fantasyscape.

In addition to a tendency towards left wing socio-politics, the Hayao Miyazaki brand-name is also associated with recurring announcements concerning his retirement. In fact, Hayao Miyazaki has 'retired' so often that no two sources can agree on precisely how many times he has attempted to end his career (Amidi, 2014:1): the best estimates range from between seven (Christofi, 2014:1) to ten (Huq, 2014:1). At the time of writing in 2018 we are quite possibly temporarily exiting a period of retirement (Carroll, 2016:1), as it is speculated he will be directing the upcoming project *Boro the Caterpillar* currently slated for a 2021 release date, although precisely what his final involvement in this film remains to be seen. Hayao Miyazaki, commenting after the completion of *Wind*, stated that 'I know I've said I would retire many times in the past. Many of you must think, 'Once again.' But this time I am quite serious' (Miyazaki quoted in Kurtenbach and Yamaguchi, 2013:1). One has every right to be sceptical of such statements however; as Odell and Le Blanc note, 'Miyazaki has often announced his 'retirement' from directing and the handing over of the baton to the next

generation. So far, however, he has kept coming back to direct 'one more film' (2010:19). Whether or not Hayao Miyazaki has finally retired permanently at the time of writing in 2018 is immaterial, the pressing question to be answered pertains to the effects of this pattern upon the Hayao Miyazaki brand-name. One might argue that Studio Ghibli did not *intend* to engender such an atmosphere and that Hayao Miyazaki intended to retire earlier but changed his mind following various tumultuous events such as the unexpected death of animation director Yoshifumi Kondo (Drazen, 2003:276) or the 'rumblings of discontent' (Odell and Le Blanc, 2010:133) following *Tales from Earthsea* as directed by Gorō Miyazaki. Yet discussing the intent behind these occurrences is beside the point: even if Studio Ghibli did not plan to exploit retirement as a marketing exercise, the attention of the popular media has certainly created a promotional effect nevertheless. Matt Kamen goes as far as to suggest that 'Miyazaki announcing retirement is almost part of the marketing for a new Ghibli movie' (2014:1). That is to say, on multiple occasions, the managed scarcity of a Hayao Miyazaki film acts as evidence of performative labour, thereby imbuing both Japanese and American campaigns with the systemscape of Disneyfication evident in promotional paratexts alone.

Both the politics and career trajectory of Hayao Miyazaki are inflected by a polysemic self-reflexivity; on numerous occasions the director has woven doubt into the narrative surrounding his persona. In both the areas of socio-politics and retirement as outlined above, one can observe examples of Hayao Miyazaki changing his mind: firstly in relation to the Iraq conflict influencing his decision to boycott the Oscars and secondly

with regard to his continual decision to return to filmmaking. Within a reflection in the afterword of *Turning Point*, a collection of material authored by Hayao Miyazaki, he appears to refute all of his utterances published in that text and explicitly criticise the very concept of a tome which he describes as ‘a book that has collected the likes of talks I have given here and there, or what I was obliged to say, or what I wrote because I was asked to write something’ (Miyazaki, 2014:449). Here, Hayao Miyazaki insists that the reader of his authorial brand-name should always be sceptical of the motivations of the author. Moreover, he explicitly states that any views he has expressed in the past are directly influenced by extenuating circumstances or by what he was ‘obliged to say’. He continues that ‘there seems to be another “Hayao Miyazaki” unfamiliar to me [...] when I see this collection of my writings and my statements, even I can’t guarantee it is the real Hayao Miyazaki’ (Miyazaki, 2014:450). In an interview with Roger Ebert, Miyazaki declares that ‘so much of what I’ve absorbed as myth is now a part of myself that it’s difficult for me to delineate what’s original, what’s myth, what’s history, what’s me, what belongs to the past’ (quoted in Ebert, 1999:1). This recalls the possibility noted earlier concerning the existence of *multiple* Hayao Miyazakis with conflicting agendas. Miyazaki’s particular authorship can then be understood as a ‘discursive’ (Yoshimoto, 2000:61) brand-name which resists a single reading and the only constant is inconsistency. Demonstrated through the difficulty of separating the original and the myth of Hayao Miyazaki, his discursive brand-name is able to appeal to a wide variety of audiences. In the context of this study, one can position that Miyazaki is thus able to be utilised differently by Ghibli’s domestic marketing campaign and the systemscape of Disneyfication depending on the paratext in question. If one could pinpoint a specific appeal for Western audiences,

it would be a more mature, adult audience for whom the very enigmatic, fantasyscape nature of multiple Miyazakis is in itself an attraction. That is to say, the discursive nature of the Hayao Miyazaki brand-name identity legitimises the adult market for his anime, whilst the animated films themselves and the American paratexts which promote them, are more closely associated with a more mainstream cartoon consuming demographic.

### **BRANDING JOHN LASSETER**

In contrast to the personality of Hayao Miyazaki, the authorship of John Lasseter seems at first to be thoroughly straightforward. Lasseter is a well-known brand-name in America and, as Laura Holson notes, the 'chief creative officer of the two studios and the principal creative adviser at Walt Disney Imagineering' (2006:1). Due largely to his success with *Toy Story* and his prominent position within Pixar Studios, the John Lasseter brand-name lends weight to the commercial capabilities of an animated feature film released in the West. Lasseter brings with him the complex, layered brand of the 'Disney-Pixarchy [...], the exact [industrial] details of [...which] remains a source of confusion.' (Pallant, 2011:128) The Pixar brand is described by Wells as 'a related but ultimately different form' (2002a:164) and yet Pallant describes the author function as 'a desirable brand name maintained by Disney.' (2011:128) Taking both of these perspectives into account, one can argue that John Lasseter, through the brand-name of Pixar, enacts the function of branding certain projects with an element of differentiation from the broader primary Disney brand-name.

When Disney came to distribute Ghibli films in America and beyond, they turned to John Lasseter to help break down linguistic and cultural boundaries. As mentioned earlier, the author brand-names of Dempsey, Docter, Kennedy and Wexler are utilised in behind-the-scenes paratexts in order to contextualise the Disneyfied, re-dubbed star-images in an anime environment. However, as evidenced by the introductory Oscars' speech quoted earlier, Lasseter as a brand-name continues to act as the ambassador for Miyazaki and Ghibli as a whole. In her deconstruction of the re-marketing of *Spirited Away*, Denison notes that 'a promotional focus was found for America in the person of director John Lasseter, who became the central promotional personality driving Miyazaki's film into the country' (2007:317). Denison stresses the promotional aspect of the John Lasseter brand-name and the importance of his role in appearing in paratextual material. She goes on to write that the use of the John Lasseter brand-name

carefully positions the film in its American market: it focuses on the 'American' aspects of the re-dubbing in an attempt to naturalise and explain the 'foreign' and 'Oriental' aspects it contains, in order to make it more accessible.

Therefore, the use of Lasseter in the promotion [...] acted to authenticate the American version of this Japanese film. (2007:317)

In this observation, Denison argues that the primary function of John Lasseter is to provide context for the Oriental origins of the film in favour of the 'natural' cultural elements of the American version. Due to the fact that the image tracks for both the Japanese film and American version of a Ghibli text are identical as a result of the Disney-Tokuma deal of 1996, the only methods with which one might obscure Japanese origins are the promotional marketing and the aurality of a given film. Denison points out that, as a result of this state of affairs, 'for Lasseter what is important in his version is the English language and 'good acting', not the beauty inherent in the film's imagery' (2007:317). Denison's point here is that by stressing the specificities of sound over sight, John Lasseter is able to shift attention away from the Japanese-looking imagery and towards the American-sounding aurality, thereby persuading the American audience to consume a film they may have otherwise avoided.

Judging by Denison's description of the John Lasseter brand-name, one might assume that his involvement had these three purposes: to extend the reach of the film through appearing in marketing materials, to conceal the cultural origins of the anime medium-genre and to place emphasis on the aurality of the text through a focus on stardom and a natural linguistic translation. Building from this foundation, I argue that Lasseter acts as the physical bridge between the West and the East in Anglophone discussions of Ghibli products, attempting to accommodate both Western and Japanese customs into the dialogue. Pallant observes that 'Lasseter [...is] always keen to facilitate the artistic ambitions of his colleagues' (2011:142) and in this sense one can perceive

Lasseter as a facilitator whose brand-name bridges the gap between the anime fantasyscape and the Disneyfied systemscape. As an example of this phenomenon, through two separate paratexts one observes Hayao Miyazaki and John Lasseter greet each other in the Western style of a handshake (see (00:00:52 – 00:00:54), 'Hello Mr Lasseter - Part 1', 2008) and then, at a different meeting, choosing to greet one another in the Japanese fashion of bowing one's head (see (00:00:19 – 00:00:21), 'PONYO (2009) INTERVIEW - HAYAO MIYAZAKI AND JOHN LASSETER', 2009). One might argue that in doing so Miyazaki and Lasseter are merely politely observing cultural norms. Yet by including such greetings within promotional paratexts both Ghibli and Disney are complicit in the construction of a bridge between the two cultures, sited in the brand-name of John Lasseter.

In order to discuss the involvement of John Lasseter in Ghibli further, I suggest the addition of my own three observations in addition to Denison's arguments. Firstly, that John Lasseter often re-contextualises Ghibli for Western audiences by emphasising *spatial* relationships. That is to say, his descriptions of the Ghibli fantasyscape are frequently peppered with similarities to Western spaces in favour of Japanese ones. Although this is often in relation to European influences rather than American inflections, his comments aid the process of re-imagining Ghibli as a Western product by eliding its Oriental origins. This builds on Denison's earlier point regarding Lasseter obscuring Oriental origins of *Spirited Away*: in a sense, Lasseter is engaged with concealing the Oriental origins of both Studio Ghibli and Hayao Miyazaki. For example, in an interview concerning the Studio Ghibli Museum, he describes Hayao Miyazaki as

possessing an 'interesting European flair' (see (00:06:30 – 00:06:32), 'The Ghibli Museum Interview with John Lasseter', 2013) proceeding to comment that 'he always [...] finds the really charming elements [...] whether its Swiss or German [...] around the Alps [...] from Italy to France [...] right in that area [...] he just pulls the most appealing elements of that style of architecture and then does it in a fresh way' (see (00:06:35 – 00:07:02), 'The Ghibli Museum Interview with John Lasseter', 2013). Through using words like 'charming' and 'appealing' John Lasseter is actively re-positioning the frame through which Western audiences view Ghibli. Instead of representing a 'virtual version of "Japan"' (Iwabuchi, 2002:33), Studio Ghibli can now be read as representing a 'caricatured European style' (see (00:08:04 – 00:08:07), 'The Ghibli Museum Interview with John Lasseter', 2013), which contains 'elements that [...] you feel like you're familiar with' (see (00:07:21 – 00:07:26), 'The Ghibli Museum Interview with John Lasseter', 2013). By reducing the domestic origins to what John Lasseter, in his own words, terms 'a Japanese flavour' (see (00:09:57 – 00:09:59), 'The Ghibli Museum Interview with John Lasseter', 2013), and by re-describing the texts using reference points familiar to Western audiences, he enables the Western audience to consume Ghibli products outside of the context of Japanese Oriental origins. In other words, if Disneyfied Ghibli were a dish and John Lasseter the chef then his role in the preparatory process would be to pad out the plate with what might be termed Western texture that overwhelms the original Japanese cultural 'odor' (Iwabuchi, 2002:94).

Secondly, that the John Lasseter brand-name is accentuated by the physicality of his presence and indeed Denison chooses to describe John Lasseter as ‘a star director in his own right’ (2007:317). Although other authors can occasionally utilise their appearance to emphasise a particular point, as we have seen above with Hayao Miyazaki and his anti-nuclear stance, they are much more likely to employ their brand-name alone, negating the need for a physical appearance, as is evident in the handwritten note from Hayao Miyazaki concerning the 2003 Oscar ceremony. In contrast, John Lasseter deploys his physicality more often as a key part of his author-image, adding a real, corporeal point of reference for Western audiences that are acclimated to attaching both a name *and* a face to a given text. In the ‘Behind the Microphone’ promotional video featured on the DVD for *Howl*, it is deemed necessary to utilise the physicality of the John Lasseter author-image *even though he was not present*. Here, we see him coaching Billy Crystal via videoconference (see (00:07:04 – 00:07:06), ‘Howl’s Moving Castle DVD Extra ~ Behind the Microphone’, 2011) during his vocal performance of Calcifer, despite the fact that John Lasseter was in Northern California and Billy Crystal was in New York (see (00:06:05 – 00:06:12), ‘Howl’s Moving Castle DVD Extra ~ Behind the Microphone’, 2011). In spite of the fact that John Lasseter was not present during the re-dubbing process, Lasseter appears in the optics of paratextual materials based solely on the *physicality of his brand-name* – that is to say the way in which he looks and the recognisability of his facial and physical characteristics. Crucially, this pairing of John Lasseter and Billy Crystal echoes their earlier collaboration evidenced within the paratextual materials for Pixar’s *Monsters, Inc.* (Pete Docter, 2001), specifically a number of staged images of Lasseter and Crystal alongside other Hollywood stars and producers (see ‘Monsters, Inc.: Photo Gallery’,

N.D.). Thus, through paratextual material alone, Lasseter is able to bridge the gap between Ghibli's *Howl* and Pixar's *Monsters, Inc.*, uniting both of them under the umbrella of Disneyfication. In other words, John Lasseter acts as a bridge between the fantasyscape of anime and the systemscape of the Disneyfied cartoon.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the involvement of John Lasseter adds the element of a personable relationship. Many sources claim that Hayao Miyazaki and John Lasseter are particularly close; John Lasseter himself proclaimed in 2006 that they have been friends for 'about twenty years' (see (00:00:46 – 00:00:48), 'TCM Hayao Miyazaki Interview with John Lasseter - Spirited Away, My Neighbor Totoro', 2009). He proceeds to suggest that his textual involvement in the re-dubbing process of Ghibli films is a direct result of this friendship, remarking that 'our friendship got so strong that the first screening of *Spirited Away* outside of Japan was at our studio, Pixar Animation Studios and Miyazaki-san and his producer Suzuki-san asked me to help them with the English language dub of the film' (see (00:02:45 – 00:03:03), 'TCM Hayao Miyazaki Interview with John Lasseter - Spirited Away, My Neighbor Totoro', 2009). In this instance, the decision to deploy the themed narrative of friendship between Hayao Miyazaki and John Lasseter conceals the more mundane distributional arrangement as outlined by the Disney-Tokuma deal. This fulfils Warren's criteria of Disneyfication, which is to divide the spheres of production and consumption, eliding evidence of labour (1994:92). John Lasseter is not the only Disney executive to construct this themed narrative; other Disney directors echo Lasseter's personable nature. Ned Lott, producer of the American version of *Howl*, claims that the existence

of such an amicable relationship between Hayao Miyazaki and John Lasseter formed the logical basis behind the decision to utilise John Lasseter in coaching Billy Crystal via video conference, stating that ‘having John Lasseter a part of this is a tremendous pleasure because he’s a very good friend of Miyazaki-san’ (see (00:05:53 – 00:06:12), ‘Howl’s Moving Castle DVD Extra ~ Behind the Microphone’, 2011). One might convincingly argue that John Lasseter can truthfully be described as a ‘very good friend of Miyazaki-san’ despite the fact that they do not share a common language. Yet whether or not the relationship between these two men has a foundation in reality or is wholly fabricated is irrelevant to this analysis. What is pertinent is that this paratextual narrative, factual or otherwise, is propagated at every level of the production and promotion processes and thus is indicative that, in the eyes of both Western and Japanese producers, the involvement of the John Lasseter brand-name is closely associated with personal relationships.

Even Ghibli actively reciprocates the construction of the friendship narrative through the release in 2003 of a documentary entitled *Lasseter-San Arigato / Rasetā san arigatō* (Takashi Seki, 2003). That is not to suggest Ghibli and Disney receive the same benefits of utilising John Lasseter as a facilitating brand-name. For Ghibli, Lasseter is their link to Pixar, Disney, cartoons and the West, an important tool in connecting the anime branded-subgenre to the wider world of animation. For Disney, Lasseter is a device through which Disneyfication occurs, a site wherein the Oriental origins of Japanese anime are parsed and the more marketable discursive Hayao Miyazaki brand-name is accentuated. In terms of the Disneyfication of Ghibli, John Lasseter is the

'gatekeeper auteur' (Hunt, 2008) in two senses: acting as a two way filter site of the 'commingling of Studio Ghibli and Disney's brand meanings' (Denison, 2015:120) for the benefit of both corporations. This duality is exquisitely represented in the *Howl Behind the Microphone* paratext wherein John Lasseter is literally introducing Hayao Miyazaki to the consumer through voicing 'Miyazaki-san the world. The world, Miyazaki-san' (see (00:05:58 – 00:06:02), 'Howl's Moving Castle DVD Extra ~ Behind the Microphone', 2011). Understanding John Lasseter as the bridge brand-name – the global-local nexus (Morley and Robins, 1995:115) at which Japanese and Western audiences can gather reference points that ease consumption of otherwise exotic animations – is crucial to appreciating his role in the Disneyfication of Ghibli products.

### **BRANDING STUDIO GHIBLI**

Similar to Hayao Miyazaki's discursive branding, at first the study of Studio Ghibli as a brand-name seemingly resists analysis because connotations attached to the author function appear to be arbitrary at best. An inquiry into its very etymology proves to be an unrewarding endeavour; Patrick Drazen notes that '*ghibli* were planes that scouted the Sahara, and were so called because the name meant "hot desert wind"' (2003:262). One might believe at this juncture that this provides evidence of a link between the Japanese studio and a European flair. However, in the documentary *Kingdom of Dreams and Madness / Yume to kyōki no ōkoku* (Mami Sunada, 2013), Hayao Miyazaki himself denounces any significance associated with this decision by remarking that "'Ghibli" is just a random name I got from an airplane. It's only a name'

(01:04:14 - 01:04:23). This dynamic, wherein one attempts to create meaning which the producers themselves decry, proves to be a recurring pattern when examining the Studio Ghibli brand-name. By keeping the signification of their brand-name open, Ghibli are able to remain discursive and appeal to a broad audience both domestically and globally.

In the same way as the above discussion concerning Hayao Miyazaki as an auteur-star, the study of Studio Ghibli as an author function has been to some extent covered by academics in the past (McCarthy, 2002; Drazen, 2003; Odell and Le Blanc, 2010), although, as with studies of the Hayao Miyazaki brand-name, such analyses tend to focus on the relatively superficial topic of recurring textual themes, imagery and narratives. These motifs are similar to those pertaining to the Hayao Miyazaki style as outlined above, but as they also pertain to the films of Isao Takahata and other directors at the studio they are perhaps even broader in scope. Odell and Le Blanc identify several such criteria including: environmentalism, flying, children, anthropomorphism, zoomorphism, metamorphosis, wind, weather, worlds within our own, Shintō and Japanese mythology, social community, European influences and, perhaps not surprisingly, references to Japanese culture (2010:19-33). Several scholars (Drazen, 2003:257-279; Odell and Le Blanc, 2010:46-139; McCarthy, 2002:50-203) focus upon providing a chronological breakdown of the studio's films to date by tracking the key plot points of Ghibli's common themes. That is to say, many analyses seem to stop at this point rather than delve further into the complexities of the Studio Ghibli brand-name.

Denison's 2015 chapter on Studio Ghibli progresses the debate further by examining the '*Studios Ghibli*' (2015:123, emphasis in original) and how the many branches of the branded-subgenre interact with one another. This analysis participates in a deeper dialogue regarding the studio by moving beyond the fixation on the text and moving towards a paratextual appreciation of Studio Ghibli as an author function. In her article entitled 'Anime tourism: discursive construction and reception of the Studio Ghibli Art Museum', Denison points out that 'it is increasingly insufficient to think of anime as simply film and television texts' (2010:545) and insists that the modern era 'require[s] a rethinking of text-centred appreciations of anime' (2010:546). Denison clarifies her position further, going on to remark that

fans of anime from around the world [...] are engaging with their chosen objects of affection not just as texts but as performances to be enacted (through cosplay, dressing up at conventions), as avatars to be controlled in video games, as objects to be collected and as spaces that can be occupied. Anime fandom is, therefore, a much more active undertaking (for many if not all) than the consumption of texts implies. (2010:545)

In the context of Studio Ghibli, whilst of course the anime texts themselves exist in a central position within the Studio Ghibli brand-name, the paratexts surrounding them – including various appearances by the producers at global Comic Con events; the

videogame *Nino Kuni: Wrath of the White Witch*; a wealth of available merchandise; and the Studio Ghibli Museum – modulate the company’s identity with a multitude of additional inflections. Whole tomes could be published regarding these many paratextual iterations – and in due course I expect this field to be rich with more detailed academic study – but for the purposes of keeping this analysis concise, I continue Denison’s focal point and concentrate my efforts into discussing perhaps the most famous Studio Ghibli paratext: the Studio Ghibli Museum in Mitaka, Tokyo.

The first thing that should be stated about the Studio Ghibli Museum is that every effort is made to encourage the consumer to link the paratextual exhibitions with their textual counterpoints. Upon entering the Studio Ghibli Museum for the first time, John Lasseter exclaimed that ‘this museum is amazing; it’s like stepping into a Miyazaki-san film’ (see (00:00:48 – 00:00:57), ‘The Ghibli Museum Interview with John Lasseter’, 2013). The same connection is made by Denison who emphasises ‘the clarity and prominence of the connections between the Museum space and Miyazaki’s films’ (2010:552), advancing to note that content within the commemorative DVD produced in relation to the Studio Ghibli Museum specifically references the architecture of *Spirited Away* as its inspiration (2010:551). Writing in 2002, Hayao Miyazaki penned a short article called ‘This is the Kind of Museum I Want to Make’ in a pamphlet entitled ‘The Ghibli Museum of Mitaka; In anticipation of the opening of Mitaka City Animation Museum’ (2014:259). Here, Miyazaki, himself, confirms that his original intention behind the creation of the Studio Ghibli Museum was to construct a building that was ‘put together as if it were a film’ (Miyazaki, 2014:259). Through continuously re-

connecting the Studio Ghibli Museum back to its textual inspiration, Studio Ghibli have constructed a feedback loop wherein the Studio Ghibli Museum is able to, in turn, inflect the primary texts that go on to re-influence the exhibitions within the Studio Ghibli Museum and so on *ad infinitum*.

In addition, the Studio Ghibli Museum serves to connect the consumer not only to individual texts, but also to the recurring themes and motifs oft associated with Ghibli as discussed above. In particular, Denison comments that ‘the association between the [surrounding Inokashira] park and the museum purposefully mirrors themes within many of Miyazaki and Takahata’s Ghibli films, which frequently entertain pro-environment motifs and [...] this in turn reinforces the importance of nature to the Ghibli brand of filmmaking’ (2010:550). Here, Denison makes the crucial point that the geographical position within the green surrounds of the famous Mitaka Park serve to further reflect back upon a perceived ecological concern within the Studio Ghibli brand-name and thus completing the feedback loop. Further associations to recurring textual motifs within the Ghibli branded-subgenre can be made concerning the European influenced cuisine offered in the ‘Straw Hat’ café. The Studio Ghibli Museum is favourably connected to the rest of the elements within the Ghibli brand-name in such a way as to enhance an appreciation of Ghibli texts and also function as a gentle reminder to the consumer as to the uniqueness of the Studio Ghibli brand-name.

Another function of the Studio Ghibli Museum is to diversify discussions of authorship away from the persona of Hayao Miyazaki and towards an appreciation for Studio

Ghibli as an author function. Although Denison points out that ‘the Miyazaki brand name of popular entertainment is used to attract visitors’ (2010:552), she also claims that the Studio Ghibli Museum provides consumers with ‘an understanding of animation as *collaborative art*’ (Denison, 2010:554, emphasis in original). Promotional material for the launch of the Studio Ghibli Museum featuring other auteur-stars was also used to dispel the notion of Hayao Miyazaki as the sole author within Ghibli, as Denison notes that

Takahata has also been instrumental in promoting the Museum space, for instance appearing alongside Miyazaki’s son, the museum’s sometime director, Gorō Miyazaki, in a DVD celebrating the museum’s creation [...] these two animators, by providing a crucial set of pre-existing meanings that could be associated with the Studio Ghibli Art Museum, effectively branded the site before it was built. (2010:550)

The appearance of directors Gorō Miyazaki and Isao Takahata in such paratextual material adds weight and legitimisation to the status of Studio Ghibli as an author function. The manner in which they branded the site was their appearance together for the same cause: the celebration and prioritisation of the collective author function, embodied by the Studio Ghibli Museum itself. Moreover, much like how various aspects of a film’s production and distribution may be outsourced to external entities, the construction of the Studio Ghibli Museum was completed with the aid of authors from outside Studio Ghibli itself. The involvement of auteur-stars from outside Studio

Ghibli was instrumental to the creation of several of the exhibits in the Studio Ghibli Museum, including works from authors such as: HAL, led by Yuzo Nishitani, who constructed the modelling for the figures in the 'Bouncing Totoro' three-dimensional zoetrope (Miyazaki, 2012:191); Kozo Saito, who produced the 'Films Go Round' exhibition (2012:192); and Haruyuki Kato, who created the acoustic design for the 'Saturn Theater' (2012:193). Hayao Miyazaki summed up his intention behind this aspect of the Studio Ghibli Museum by remarking that 'I wanted people to understand that to produce one film, all these people gathered together and spent this much time to do it' (2012:198). The effect of emphasising the authorship of multiple authors both within and without the Studio Ghibli brand-name serves to de-emphasise Hayao Miyazaki as the auteur-star of Ghibli products and to remind the consumer of the collaborative nature of the filmmaking process. This is despite the fact that Hayao Miyazaki himself wrote, or is credited for, many of these pamphlets and other paratexts regarding the museum's approach to collaboration. It is my contention, however, that this particular function is targeted primarily at the domestic Japanese consumers, considering that, excepting Denison's scholarly article, the majority of the material outlined above which supports this argument has only recently been translated into English.

If the positioning of Studio Ghibli as an author function which trumps the auteur-star brand-name Hayao Miyazaki is arguably targeted primarily at the domestic market, the Western, Disneyfied market must presumably be encouraged to perceive the opposite: that Hayao Miyazaki is the sole author at the centre of the creative process. Several

scholars have suggested this connection, with Cavallaro describing the Museum as 'Miyazakiland' (2006:43) and Hernández-Pérez writing that 'the museum is designed [...] around the cult of Miyazaki's figure and his personal philosophy, which may be considered the most important capital for the company.' (2016:309) In this context, the logic behind (eventually) translating materials into English and appealing to a global audience is clear: due to the ever increasing ease of access to Japan (Denison, 2010:547) as well as 'the growing economic potential and transnationalisation of the anime tourist market' (Denison, 2010:546) there is a clear financial incentive for Ghibli targeting not only domestic anime tourists but global ones too. Denison goes on to note that

English-language signage within the Museum, lack of dialogue in the short films, foreign-language and bi-lingual guidebooks and completely separate systems for selling tickets to potential visitors from within and outside of Japan, all suggest that the Museum recognises the needs of, and caters to, international anime tourists, particularly English speaking ones. (2010:555)

The Studio Ghibli Museum is able to position Hayao Miyazaki as the auteur-star for the international consumer by depending not on language but on imagery and representation, relying on the communication of an 'extra-linguistic set of potential meanings' (Denison, 2010:552). It does this by utilising the physical space to construct an idealised fantasy studio of the auteur-star. Daniel Buren comments that on a fundamental level these two spaces hold different purposes, describing 'the studio as

the *unique space* of production and the museum as the *unique space* of exposition' (1979:51, emphasis in original). Here, Buren emphasises that the 'studio' is used unambiguously for textual production whereas the 'museum', often the product of the studio, is the public facing site wherein your consumers may decode various meanings from the paratexts on display. In the case of Studio Ghibli, the Studio Ghibli Museum houses a permanent exhibit entitled 'Where a Film is Born' that attempts to relay the process of anime production in order to 'understand the artists' spirits, and [... to] gain new insights into animation' (Miyazaki, 2014:260). Hayao Miyazaki goes on to comment that

these rooms are built based on the concept of an animation studio set in a rented mansion, and that the staff are working in that small space. We wanted to explain the animation process as visitors walk through the rooms. (2012:194)

He later admits however, that the reality of the studio space is not reflected in the representation within the museum, commenting that 'the workplace in reality looks nothing like this though!' (Miyazaki, 2012:195). Within the 'Where a Film is Born' permanent exhibit, there is a romanticised idea of a lone animator's desk strewn with evidence of this fabricated labour. I argue that this idyllic representation of a lone animator's desk forms part of a construction that Ghibli disseminates specifically to the global consumer: the concept of Miyazaki's individual authorship. By not only indulging in this fantasy but also commodifying it in the form of an exhibit, Studio Ghibli has undergone a form of Disneyfication for the benefit of international anime tourists.

That is, by attempting to conceal the site of labour (Warren, 1994) and mask the extent of participation contributed by other authors in favour of the more traditionally marketable idea of the auteur-star.

In terms of providing further evidence of Disneyfication, the Ghibli Museum can be seen as imitating the particular space of the Disney theme parks. Bryman notes that 'the distinction between theme parks and museums has increasingly become blurred' (2004:49). There are three aspects of the Ghibli Museum which reflect the facets of Disneyfication: theming, hybrid consumption and control. On the subject of the former, Bryman writes that '[i]n a sense, museums have always been themed, but as museums have proliferated and become increasingly specialized, they have looked more and more like themed institutions.' (2004:49) Ghibli is a clear example of a specialized museum, in that the themed narrative of the museum focuses solely on the studio's canon and the history of animation. As Bryman notes, the benefit of themed environments is that it results in 'consumers dropping their normally judicious guards' (2004:143), thereby encouraging an increased propensity to 'spend more than might otherwise have been the case.' (2004:142).

Furthermore, Bryman outlines that museums involve hybrid consumption through three methods, noting that

[f]irst and most obviously, they are increasingly tuned to providing shopping and restaurant opportunities for visitors. These are invariably a major source of income and have moved far beyond the small shop you pass through as you exit [...]econd, museums are sometimes part of general hybrid consumption settings [...]hird, what is and is not a museum is increasingly difficult to determine. (2004:72)

One can observe that all three of these observations occur within the Ghibli Museum. Within the museum itself are a number of subsidiary retail outlets, including the 'Straw Hat' café, the 'Tri Hawks' reading room, the hot dog stand and, of course, the 'Mamma Aiuto' gift shop (see 'Ghibli Museum, Mitaka: Welcome', N.D.:1). In addition to the retail experiences outlined above, a number of other experiences complicate its definition as solely a museum space, including the theme park nature of the Cat Bus and the screenings exhibited in the Saturn Theater.

Finally, the atmosphere within the Ghibli Museum is comparable to the 'high level of control [...] over the movement and behaviour of guests.' (Bryman, 2004:132) evident in the Disney theme parks. One particular commonality between the two themed spaces is the prohibition of photography, which is forbidden in certain areas in both the Disney theme parks (2004:133) and the Ghibli Museum (Denison, 2010:557). The end result is that whilst, for a Japanese fan, these elements of narrative theming, hybrid consumption and control do not necessarily denote the systemscape of Disneyfication, for the Western 'anime tourist' (Denison, 2010), the Ghibli Museum is

sufficiently Disneyfied so as 'to create a ludic ambience with which to shroud consumption and to mask its commercialism.' (Bryman, 2004:160)

As we have seen then, Studio Ghibli at first appears to be a discursive brand-name that is wholly contradictory: seemingly encouraging an appreciation of the collaborative nature of textual production and Studio Ghibli as the author function and then appearing to refute this claim by focusing on the idealised studio space of the auteur-star. Yet these inconsistencies can be resolved when one considers the differing target audiences: on the one hand, portraying Studio Ghibli itself as the author function to the domestic market through explicit linguistic references and, on the other hand, setting up Hayao Miyazaki as the auteur-star to the global audience via the set of processes symptomatic of Disneyfication's systemscape. In undertaking this approach, Studio Ghibli is able to offer 'a cultural experience that spans across a wide variety of audiences for anime, maximising its potential appeals while reinforcing the 'quality' aspects of the Ghibli brand name' (Denison, 2010:560). It is my argument that the function of the Studio Ghibli brand-name will differ between cultures, languages and geographic regions and that the author function, mirroring one of its own recurring motifs, undergoes metamorphosis in order to cater for the sensibilities of the target demographic. As such, its author function might be best described as a mutable brand-name wherein its role is wholly dependent on whether the audience is approaching from the perspective of the domestic fantasyscape of the anime medium-genre, or the Disneyfied systemscape characterised by international anime tourism (Denison, 2010).

## DISNEY AS METONYM

Disney's primary textual role is to re-position the anime medium-genre into the Disneyfied systemscape of the cartoon and this process is largely achieved through re-dubbing and re-casting the stars present in the audio track (see 'Chapter Three – Stardom: Re-Dubbing and Star-Images') in addition to the application of themed narratives in promotional paratexts (as will be discussed in 'Chapter Five – Promotion: Disneyfying the Paratext'). In a paratextual context, certain elements of the involvement of Disney in the cross-cultural translation process have already been covered earlier in this chapter in relation to the auteur-star brand-name of John Lasseter. However, Disney is once more deployed as a reference point for authorial relations – following Bryman's conception of Disney as a '*metonym for an authorially complex, hierarchical industrial process, which organises and executes selective practices within the vocabularies of animated film.*' (2002a:104, emphasis in original) Wasko records that 'it is sometimes difficult to separate the history of Disney the man from that of Disney the company' (2001:7). Manuel Hernández-Pérez adds to this observation, noting that

'Disney' is no longer only Walt Disney himself but simply another way of understanding cinema. 'Disney' may just be the disembodied essence of an author. It has become, by virtue of distillation or sublimation, a category in its own right. 'Disney' is now a mere adjective, whether it evokes a known trademark or a prestigious major studio. (2016:301-2)

In this sense one can infer that when Ghibli is compared to 'Uncle Walt' – a nickname allegedly given to the producer by actress Annette Funicello (Sherman, 2013:292) – what is truly being referenced is the broader set of processes known as Disneyfication.

Commenting upon other sources (Jolin, 2011; Hu, 2010:116), Hernández-Pérez writes 'there is a tendency within film criticism and media studies to highlight Hayao Miyazaki as a fitting comparison with the Walt Disney figure.' (2016:298) At first, the reasoning behind this contrast appears straightforward: both are famous animators with the backing of their own production studio; both re-defined the possibilities of the animation field; and both have received popular and critical acclaim. John Lasseter goes as far as to posit that

in the history of animation, which dates back to the earliest years of film itself, there are two figures whose contributions to our art form place them above all others: the first is Walt Disney, the second is Hayao Miyazaki. (see (00:00:04 – 00:00:28), 'John Lasseter honors Hayao Miyazaki at the 2014 Governors Awards', 2014)

As has often been remarked upon, in staunch opposition to the recent era of three-dimensional CGI Flash anime, Hayao Miyazaki prefers to make cel-style anime that are two-dimensional and hand drawn, the same animation style for which Walt Disney,

limited by the technology available to him at the time, became famous. The fact that these two animators produced two-dimensional animations is drawn attention to by deploying the facilitating bridge brand-name of John Lasseter as a mediator. In other words, certain paratextual comments emphasising two-dimensional animation made by John Lasseter in interviews that are otherwise directly connected to Studio Ghibli ensure that one is able to connect early Disney two-dimensional cartoons with Ghibli anime. For example, in an interview with Gorō Miyazaki concerning the Studio Ghibli Museum, John Lasseter accentuates his own career history, commenting that ‘my training is in 2D animation, I was trained by the great Disney artists and I worked at the Disney studios’ (see (00:14:24 – 00:14:34), ‘The Ghibli Museum Interview with John Lasseter’, 2013). In a different interview, John Lasseter frames himself not only in the context of Disney but also two of the auteur-stars of the famous Disney animators comprising ‘Disney’s ‘Nine Old Men’ (Pallant, 2011:10), remarking that ‘my mentors were Frank Thomas and Ollie Johnston, two of the great Disney animators’ (see (00:08:15 – 00:08:19), ‘TCM Hayao Miyazaki Interview with John Lasseter – Spirited Away, My Neighbor Totoro’, 2009). Such a comparison creates a web of association in one’s mind between the early career of John Lasseter as a two-dimensional animator – as well as by extension the early status of Disney as a two-dimensional animation studio – and, due to the context of the paratextual remarks, the anime of Studio Ghibli and Hayao Miyazaki.

Furthermore, despite the fact that neither animator favoured computer driven animation, an attempt is made by Disney, once again through the brand-name of John

Lasseter, to insist that both directors are respectful of the modern method. In relation to Walt Disney, owing to his passing in 1966, such an endeavour is necessarily informed by subjective speculation, such as the comment from John Lasseter that ‘when I saw computer animation for the very first time I thought Walt would have loved this, this is what Walt was waiting for’ (see (00:17:19 – 00:17:28), ‘The Ghibli Museum Interview with John Lasseter’, 2013). To complement this conjecture, John Lasseter has been known to propagate a narrative that pinpoints his own brand-name and through him the brand-name of Disney, as holding a pivotal role in the association between Hayao Miyazaki and an appreciation of CGI animation. In one such retelling John Lasseter informs the audience that in 1987

I was working with computer animation and I finished my second short film called *Red's Dream* [...] everyone kept warning me: Miyazaki hates computer animation [...] I showed him *Luxo Jr.* and *Red's Dream* [...] everybody at the studio was, like, that's the first time he ever showed interest in computer animation. (see (00:01:28 – 00:02:35), ‘TCM Hayao Miyazaki Interview with John Lasseter – Spirited Away, My Neighbor Totoro’, 2009)

This comment claims a degree of authorship over the influences of Hayao Miyazaki and, through the bridge brand-name of John Lasseter, positions Disney, as metonym rather than author, as the organising principle behind the Disneyfied version of Ghibli texts. Moreover, in light of the upcoming CGI film *Boro the Caterpillar*, Disney as

metonym even seems to be Disneyfying the future direction of Ghibli as an animation studio.

Not all commentators agree with the proposed likeness between Walt Disney and Hayao Miyazaki. Hernández-Pérez notes there are several scholars (McCarthy, 2002; Moist and Bartholow, 2007:30) for whom the comparison is inappropriate and superficial (2016:298). Helen McCarthy insists that 'Miyazaki doesn't see what all the fuss around the Disney deal is about, viewing it as just another business venture for the American giant' (2002:211). This stance positions Hayao Miyazaki as an 'anti-Disney'. (Hernández-Pérez, 2016:299), wherein 'a comparison with Disney can [...] be set in antithetical terms by establishing a relationship of opposition between the Japanese and American authors based on narrative, stylistic and ideological differences.' (Hernández-Pérez, 2016:298-9) Yet I argue that even if one rejects the likeness between Walt Disney and Hayao Miyazaki, situating the anime auteur-star as an anti-Disney still contextualises Ghibli within the framework of the Disneyfied systemscape. As such, one is still forced to describe Ghibli's relationship in terms of an antagonistic, metonymical Disney and thus within the context of Disneyfication.

Throughout this chapter we have seen that the author function of Disney inflects Studio Ghibli products with a sense of themed narratives, hybrid consumption, merchandising, performative labour and control. By relating Studio Ghibli animations to the systemscape of Disneyfication, as well as comparing the auteur-stars of Hayao Miyazaki, John Lasseter and Walt Disney, the anime medium-genre is repositioned as

cartoonal. I have demonstrated that each of the four brand-names analysed herein add a different quality to Ghibli products: Hayao Miyazaki validates a variety of critical and populist approaches through his discursive brand-name; John Lasseter acts as the facilitating mediator for the global audience through his bridging brand-name; Studio Ghibli targets multiple linguistic and cultural demographics through its mutable brand-name; and Disney is able to re-contextualise all of the above brand-names into a layered brand which is inflected with the principles of Disneyfication. In relation to progressing the trajectory of this thesis, the layered brand of Hayao Miyazaki, John Lasseter, Studio Ghibli and Disney – in conjunction with the six star-image star-images discussed in ‘Chapter Three – Stardom: Re-Dubbing and Star-Images’ – is further discussed in a paratextual campaign analysis, which traces how the aforementioned brand-names and star-images impact specific paratextual promotional materials in the following chapter, entitled ‘Chapter Five – Promotion: Disneyfying the Paratext’.

## **CHAPTER FIVE – PROMOTION:**

### **DISNEYFYING THE PARATEXT**

#### **POSTER ANALYSIS**

#### **MARKET SIMILARITIES**

Before we begin making comparisons between Japanese and American marketing strategies, let us first examine similarities *within* linguistic contexts. The parallels between campaigns indicate the broader marketing strategies which are endemic to a specific market and no place are these principles more evident within the still-image form of the film poster. The Japanese posters have a handful of characteristics in common, but perhaps the most notable feature present within the domestic marketing campaign is the tendency to depict the film's title in bright, vibrant colours and with a hand drawn approach to the typeface. Although this is in itself not uncommon in Japanese paratextual design, in the case of these three posters the style acts to accentuate the colourful nature of the animation as well as the hand drawn nature of the individual cels (Ebert, 2002:1). By comparison the American posters have all opted for a plain white font that is immediately easy to read. This observation suggests that the Disney paratexts place increased value on the readability, and thus awareness, of a film's title, whereas the domestic campaign assumes textual familiarity and is focused instead on paratextually inflecting the film with a specific style.

Another key trend running through the Japanese posters is the tactical deployment of the catch copy. Defined by Judy Yoneoka as an 'ad slogan' (2005:37), the catch copy stems from the English term catch-phrase and might be more commonly referred to in the Western film industry as the tag line. In essence the catch copy and the tag line have the same function: to reduce the narrative and tone of the film to a single communicable sentence. The catch copy then can be understood as the favoured method in the Japanese market for conveying the narrative image of the film, whereas the American campaign tends to utilise a wider variety of techniques to relate the narrative image. Out of the Western posters only *Ponyo* (see 'PONYO POSTERS', N.D.:1) chooses to deploy a tag line to describe the film's narrative, with the technique being notably absent from the designs for *Howl* (see 'Hauru no Ugoku Shiro (Howl's Moving Castle): Posters from Around the World', N.D.:1) and *Wind* (see 'THE WIND RISES POSTERS' (N.D.:1). Despite *Ponyo*'s tagline, which reads 'welcome to a world where anything is possible', covering a reasonably large area due to the exaggerated line spacing, the small font size combined with the thinness of the typeface result in the tagline remaining relatively overlooked. That is to say that in the context of the wider image the tagline does not draw the eye in the same fashion as the catch copy of its Japanese counterpart. However, the domestic designs place a particularly prominent degree of emphasis on the catch copy. Part of the reason that catch copies stand out is that they are presented in the *tategaki* style of vertical Japanese writing, whereas the rest of the information in the poster is transcribed in the horizontal *yokogaki* format. In the Japanese poster for *Howl* (see 'HOWL'S MOVING CASTLE

POSTERS', N.D.:1) the catch copy – which reads '*futari ga kurashita*'<sup>4</sup> – is presented in white typeface well contrasted with the image beneath. The exact same process can be seen with the catch copy for *Ponyo* (see Baggs, 2016:1) – which reads '*umarete kite yokatta*'<sup>5</sup> – wherein the prominent white text of the catch copy draws the eye. Whilst the catch copy for *Wind* (see Baggs, 2016:1), which reads '*iza ikime yamo*'<sup>6</sup>, is not afforded quite as much visual space as its two predecessors, it nonetheless occupies a reasonable amount of available room within the image. The catch copies of *Howl*, *Ponyo* and *Wind* also mirror a similar theme of life and living evident in previous Ghibli films (Denison, 2015:129). The cohesion of these catch copies demonstrate the similarity between campaigns and thus both the market similarity and market *stability* of Japanese consumption of the anime medium-genre.

Furthermore, the position of star-images and brand-names are remarkably formulaic within the domestic campaign. The Studio Ghibli production logo<sup>7</sup> always appears in the top left corner, the Hayao Miyazaki brand-name<sup>8</sup> is consistently displayed above the film's title and the star-images of famous performers like Takuya Kimura<sup>9</sup> are uniformly visible underneath the title. On the one hand, one could argue that the

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<sup>4</sup> ふたりが暮らした。'Two people lived together' [my translation].

<sup>5</sup> 生まれてきてよかった。'It was good to have been born' [my translation].

<sup>6</sup> いざ生きめやも。'We must try to live' [my translation].

<sup>7</sup> スタジオジブリ作品。'A Studio Ghibli production' [my translation].

<sup>8</sup> 宮崎 駿。'Hayao Miyazaki'.

<sup>9</sup> 木村 拓哉。'Takuya Kimura'.

consistent positioning – as well as the prominent presence of the catch copy and the colourful title design – are indicative that Ghibli has settled upon a reliable formula for promotional posters within the Japanese context and that these similarities suggest the studio's anime products have been successfully sold to the domestic demographic. On the other hand, the inconsistency in placements within the American posters implies that there is no concrete procedure for promoting Ghibli films to a Western audience and that instead the process of Disneyfication takes a heterogeneous approach, characterised by 'variety and difference' (Bryman, 2004:4), so that as such the Disney localizers must create new promotional structures for every text.

### **COMPARING HOWL'S POSTERS**

Having discussed the similarities between the posters when grouped into linguistic categories, let us now move on to compare the original designs with the Anglophone versions. In the case of *Howl* one can ascertain at first glance that the two designs have almost no relationship to one another. Earlier paratextual comparisons of *Princess Mononoke* posters have noted that the female protagonist San is replaced by Ashitaka and thus the representation of gender has been Disneyfied through a process of simplifying the narrative image into one of male dominance (Ogihara-Schuck, 2014; Carter, 2018a). One can observe that the same process occurs here, wherein the empowering femininity of Sophie's character which so characterises the anime medium-genre (Wells, 1998:195-6) is de-emphasised in favour of a more

straightforward narrative of masculinity, a narrative-image more familiar for Disney localizers and audiences.

In terms of poster imagery, one notices further discrepancies between the two: the American *Howl* has opted for a black colour matte as its background, whereas the Japanese version, and indeed each of the other five posters, have chosen to use a single image from the film in question to fill the frame. The American *Howl* poster has also chosen not just one but three images to represent the film: one of Howl, one of Sophie and one of the eponymous building itself. Using these images, the Western poster successfully distils a simplified themed narrative image to the film – that is to say, that the film is concerned with the relationship between these three entities. By contrast the Japanese design does not provide much of a narrative image at all: the titular character is not shown and the castle is drawn at such an angle as to remain relatively mysterious. Instead, the narrative image of the Japanese poster must be drawn from the ‘two people lived together’ catch copy mentioned earlier, but even here it is unclear which two people lived where. No clear narrative image is applied because the domestic paratext does not need to adhere to the narrative theming of Disneyfication to market the film to Japanese audiences.

The American poster breaks up the three images with three different reviews from reputable resources: ‘Like a dream, *Howl’s Moving Castle*, enfolds the audience and carries them to a magical world beyond their imaginations’ (Charles Solomon, Animation Critic/Historian); ‘Completely original. Miyazaki’s journey down the Rabbit

Hole creates a wonderland that surpasses anything even Alice could expect' (Ron Barbagallo, Animation Art Historian); and 'Totally in a class by itself. *Howl's Moving Castle* is an early contender for the Best Animated Feature Oscar®' (Jerry Beck, Animation Historian). Each of these reviews contributes to the Western promotional campaign for *Howl* in different ways. Solomon's comment contributes to the construction of the film's narrative image by utilising language like 'dream', 'magical' and 'imagination'. Barbagallo's remark draws explicit comparisons to the Disney animation *Alice in Wonderland* (Clyde Geronimi, Wilfred Jackson and Hamilton Luske, 1951). His role in the poster is clear – by linking *Howl* with a classic Disney cartoon, Barbagallo acts as another reminder that the Western release of *Howl* is heavily associated with the Disney brand-name. Beck's statement is intended to add intellectual appeal to the film in order to appeal to a more adult audience by associating it with the prestigious Academy Awards. Even the manner in which they are represented holds significance; rather than describing Charles Solomon as a lecturer at UCLA, Ron Barbagallo as the director of a conservation practice that incidentally boasts Disney as one of their biggest clients and Jerry Beck as the co-founder and (then) co-editor of 'CartoonBrew.com', they are all depicted as 'animation historians'. Choosing to portray these three commentators with this title, whilst undoubtedly accurate to varying degrees, adds credence to their comments and bolsters their contributions to the poster's overall message.

This reliance upon reputable reviews is a facet that is wholly absent from the Japanese campaign because there is no need for it: the Japanese audience are already aware of

the critical acclaim afforded to Ghibli and thus there is no need for such comments to appear in the paratextual materials. It should be noted here that I am well aware that the practice of contextualising the paratext with what may be termed reputable review quotations from critics, historians, academics and other commentators is not normal practice in Japan, whereas it is relatively common in the Western context. Yet it is nonetheless significant that when *Howl* was released in the West in 2004 Disney felt that it was best to follow this tradition by inflecting the poster with three quotations, especially when the *Howl* poster is compared to the complete lack of reputable review quotations for the American *Ponyo* poster and the solitary quoted inflection present within the *Wind* design. Looking back even further to the *Spirited Away* campaign (Carter, 2018b), one can trace a gradual decline in critical inflections from *Spirited Away* to *The Wind Rises*, marking Disneyfication's motion towards a more structured, responsive approach to glocalization.

Finally, the American poster for *Howl* deploys a wide variety of brand-names, the most prominent of which being the Hayao Miyazaki author-image clearly visible at the top of the poster. As will become evident in later analyses, the Western localization process deems it necessary to inflect the Hayao Miyazaki brand-name with the fact that he is an Oscar winning filmmaker, thereby referencing the American structure of the Academy Awards in order to re-position Ghibli films within an Anglophone context. The next most pronounced brand-names are those of Disney and Ghibli which appear in red text above the title. The colourful, stylised nature of the font serves to accentuate these author functions and bestow an extra level of importance within a

design that elects to colour the rest of the font white. Then, below the title, there are a number of other well-known brand-names including, but not limited to, Toshio Suzuki, Joe Hisaishi and John Lasseter. These brand-names, whilst included in the poster, are de-emphasised within the design and so one can assume that these are not the brand-names that the Disney localization process are accentuating and that Hayao Miyazaki, Disney and Ghibli are the primary author functions being deployed.

In the case of the Japanese poster however, the only brand-name which is gifted any level of attention is that of Hayao Miyazaki as alluded to earlier. Other brand-names do appear – the Studio Ghibli production logo is visible in the top left corner and star-images like Kimura are listed below the title – but the comparative scale and prominence suggest these are not to be considered the primary brand-names being utilised. Thus, one can appreciate that the domestic target audience being sought is attracted by the context-free fantasyscape of anime, which has no requirement to be anchored in the reality of production companies and star-images. The Japanese campaign does, however, find a use for the auteur-star of Hayao Miyazaki, portraying his brand-name as the orchestrator of the fantasyscape.

Whereas the Japanese campaign requires only the brand-name of Hayao Miyazaki to sell the film in the domestic marketplace, the American strategy deploys the Hayao Miyazaki brand-name in conjunction with the Disney and Ghibli author functions as part of a layered brand in order to reach a sizeable audience. The contrasting campaigns for *Howl* necessitated differing approaches in the Japanese and American

markets. Whilst the Western poster needed to delineate a visual-based narrative image, legitimise the film through input from animation historians and deploy three distinct author functions, the Japanese design only had to provide a single enigmatic image from the film, include a catch copy that hints at a narrative image and reference the Hayao Miyazaki brand-name in order to promote the film.

### **COMPARING PONYO'S POSTERS**

At first glance one can spot key similarities between the Japanese and American posters promoting *Ponyo* and yet there are still quite a number of differences. To begin with, both posters use a single image which originates from the same moment towards the beginning of the film's narrative. From the Japanese design it is immediately apparent that the film is drawn in the style of the anime medium-genre; Ponyo has eyes which are preternaturally large; the depiction of the ocean waves are characteristically simplistic and understated; and the colour scheme uses a handful of bold shades with little evidence of complex shifts in hue. In contrast, the American poster possesses none of these attributes: Ponyo is not drawn in an unambiguously anime style with her eyes appearing almost googly and cartoonish in nature; the portrayal of water effects is photorealistic and careful attention is paid to ensure the appearance of rippling is lifelike; and the colour scheme is complex with several subtle shifts in shade, particularly in the range of blue tones utilised. In short, the American poster is characterised by a Disneyfying photographic hyper-realism (Wells, 1998:24; Pallant, 2011:132). Despite the fact that neither of the images are lifted directly from

the cels of the anime film, one is able, correctly, to assume they both pertain to the same moment of the film when viewing them in tandem. Yet when beheld in isolation, each poster conveys a different approach to animation; the Japanese version is instantly recognisable as anime, whereas the Western design is much closer to the animation style used in American cartoons. Specifically, the hyper-realist *Ponyo* poster deliberately echoes a promotional paratext utilized in a previous Pixar film, *Finding Nemo* (Andrew Stanton and Lee Unkrich, 2003) (see 'Finding Nemo: Photo Gallery', N.D.), especially with regard to the nautical theme, a broad palette of blue hues and photorealistic water effects.

An interesting comparison already alluded to above is the differing implications of the Japanese catch copy and the American tag line. As noted above, the Japanese catch copy loosely translates to 'I'm glad to have been born' – a phrase which connotes optimism and contentedness regarding one's position in life. Combined with the optimistic nature of the catch copy and owing to Ponyo's facial expression in the image deployed in the Japanese poster, the design imbues the narrative image with a sense of *kawaii* and cheerfulness. In comparison, the message of the American tagline 'welcome to a world where anything is possible' is far more fluid in its range of meanings, especially when taken together with the long shot of Ponyo wearing a more surprised expression. The different meanings implied by the catch copy and tag line are indicative that each campaign favours a given narrative image. The Japanese *Ponyo* depicts an optimistic, cute story for children, whereas the American *Ponyo* poster is more nuanced. The visual similarities between the Disneyfied *Ponyo* poster and the

*Finding Nemo* paratext appeals to a Western, child, cartoonal audience, whereas the hyper-realist elements of the design itself – whilst signifying Disneyfication – broaden the demographic of the text, appealing to both adult and child elements of Disney's family audience.

Finally, in terms of brand-names, the Japanese poster for *Ponyo* prioritises the same author-images as the Japanese design for *Howl* in that it relies on the Hayao Miyazaki brand-name to act as the primary marketable asset and relegates the Ghibli brand-name and star-images to the fine print. By contrast, the American poster for *Ponyo* acts slightly differently from the mechanisms at play in the *Howl* design. Whilst the primary author-images utilised remain the Hayao Miyazaki, Ghibli and Disney brand-names, the *Ponyo* poster also prominently accentuates its star-cluster, as outlined in 'Chapter Three – Stardom: Re-Dubbing and Star-Images'. This crucial inclusion of Hollywood star-images implies that the intended Western demographic for *Ponyo* is intended to be much broader and more mainstream than either the Japanese original or indeed previous Anglophone versions of Ghibli texts.

As outlined above, the differing designs for *Ponyo* outline some crucial differences between how the film was promoted in different markets. Once again the Japanese poster adhered closely to an established style for anime marketing; there is no requirement for them to utilise specialised strategies to reach wider audiences as the anime medium-genre is considered mainstream in the domestic context. However, the American version deployed a more photorealistic image design, an enigmatic tag line

and a celebrity star-cluster in order to appeal to a broader family audience that is more familiar with consuming the digital, hyper-realist cartoon medium-genre. Yet there are signs of progress in the Western campaign as well – it is now necessary to depict only one background image rather than the three evident in *Howl's* design and there is no further need to legitimise the film through reputable reviews from animation historians. In this sense, one can argue that the Disney version of Ghibli texts is beginning to display a more structured, responsive approach to glocalizing the anime medium-genre for the Western audience.

### **COMPARING WIND'S POSTERS**

When considering the poster comparison for *Wind*, one cannot help but comment on the similarity between the background imagery. Even more so than in the case of *Ponyo*, both posters choose a comparable moment from the film as their starting point for the design, electing to depict Nahoko Satomi on the top of a hill with her painting equipment. Yet there are some glaring disparities between the two campaigns, most notable of all is that whilst the Japanese design shows Nahoko alone on the hilltop, the American poster also portrays the protagonist Jirō Horikoshi in the frame kissing Nahoko. Whilst acknowledging that the American poster was not the first time this image was used, one can still comment on the fact that Disney felt it necessary to add the themed narrative of Jirō kissing Nahoko in the primary poster deployed in the Western promotion of *Wind*. The addition of this themed narrative, although certainly present in the film itself, is noticeably absent from the Japanese poster. One further

themed narrative added to the American design is the detail of the paper aeroplane that has been added to the image. Although the film is primarily concerned with flying machines, this fact is not at all evident in the Japanese design, so that by including the paper aeroplane the American poster is able to convey this fact to the Western audience. By adding these two key details – the action of the kiss and the presence of the paper aeroplane – the Disney poster portrays a more complete narrative image of the film. By contrast, the Japanese design creates an enigmatic narrative image and, with no additional foreknowledge, one would not be able to ascertain that *Wind* deals primarily with aeroplanes and romance. The difference in narrative images between these two approaches allows an insight into the kinds of markets being targeted; one may argue that the domestic campaign is reliant on the existence of a mainstream audience that will flock to a Hayao Miyazaki film no matter the plotline, whereas Disneyfication requires the application of a themed, unambiguous narrative image in order to market the film towards an adult audience.

Regarding the deployment of brand-names, the Japanese design once more primarily relies on the Hayao Miyazaki brand-name with other brand-names present but not prominently displayed. The one key difference in the *Wind* campaign is that an unusual variety of brand-names is given a conspicuous amount of detail through the *tategaki* styled phrase '*Horikoshi Jirō to hori tatsuo ni keiiwoarawashite*'<sup>10</sup>. Here, the Japanese poster is capitalising on the historical identities of Jirō Horikoshi and Tatsuo Hori, the

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<sup>10</sup> 堀越二郎と堀辰雄に敬意を表して。'In honour of Jirō Horikoshi and Tatsuo Hori' [my translation].

two authors of the source material. This decision firmly places the domestic paratext within the context of Japanese history and culture more generally, appealing to ideas of nationalism. Conversely, the Hayao Miyazaki brand-name in the Disney poster is inflected by not only the Academy but also by the São Paulo International Film Festival, the Telluride Film Festival, the New York Film Festival, the Toronto International Film Festival and *Time Magazine*. Through the inclusion of these additional inflections, both the Japanese and the American posters reinforces the serious adult nature of the narrative and attempts to legitimise the animation as worthy of critical attention, although the signifiers used are markedly different.

Moreover, one immediately notices that the Disney brand-name is nowhere to be seen and in its place lies the author-image of Touchstone Pictures – a subsidiary of The Walt Disney Company. As Denison comments, ‘Ghibli’s more challenging films have been shunted into Disney’s peripheral brand spaces. For example [...] *The Wind Rises* [...] was released through Disney’s Touchstone Pictures’ (2015:119). In a previous campaign analysis of *Princess Mononoke* (Carter, 2018a), I have discussed the release of more challenging Ghibli texts under subsidiary ‘banners’ (Wasko, 2001:43). In that case the ‘independent’ brand-name of Miramax (Wyatt, 1998; Perren, 2001; Biskind, 2004). Wasko describes Touchstone as an ‘adult-oriented film label’ (2001:31) and in this sense one can describe their promotion of *Wind* as an example of the Disneyfication symptoms of corporate partnerships, limited exposure and diversified expansion (2001:34-5). That is to say, by releasing the film through the adult-oriented, independent, subsidiary banner of Touchstone Pictures, this provides Disney with the

ability 'to distribute films that are not associated with the family-oriented, PG-rated Disney brand' (2001:43), echoing the distinction made between Disney and the child connotations of Pixar, as alluded to in 'Chapter Four – Authorship: Auteur-Stars and Author Functions'. By removing the primary Disney brand-name from the promotional campaign, Disneyfication processes can continue to occur and the loosely defined Disney family audience can still be targeted, but the more child centred connotation of the primary Disney brand-name is protected from mature, sensitive political issues relating to smoking and war.

When comparing the strategies deployed in *Wind* to the style established in *Howl* and *Ponyo*, one can argue that both versions of the marketing campaign have made significant alterations to accommodate *Wind*. The Japanese strategy has elected to include additional hints as to the narrative image through the deployment of the historical identities of Jirō Horikoshi and Tatsuo Hori as well as a catch copy that utilises dated Japanese grammar. Denison comments that this strategy has been employed by Ghibli in the past, remarking that in the case of *Princess Mononoke* 'traditional aspects of Japanese language are utilised [...] to distinguish this film from other, namely American, *daihitto* films on offer [...] traditional phrases work [...] appealing directly to patriotic sentiment within potential Japanese audiences' (2008a:110). In this sense, one can argue that the target demographic is the sizeable nationalistic element present within the mainstream Japanese audience. Yet this nationalistic approach could hardly be translated to the American consumer, as they are not likely to identify with a film concerning the Japanese war effort. By contrast,

through a reliance on multiple inflections from film festivals and other critical signifiers, as well as a visual-based narrative image constructed around the theme of romance and flight, the Disneyfication re-marketing strategy is able to de-emphasise this geographic anchoring and aims the text at the adult-oriented, independent audience consistent with Touchstone's brand identity.

It is clear that throughout the Japanese still image campaigns the narrative image is given a much higher priority than in the Western marketing strategy. One of the influencing factors for this contrast is that the Japanese marketplace is richly saturated with the narrative image of a Studio Ghibli film well before its theatrical release. Hence, validating theories pertaining to anime and both the 'media mix' (Steinberg, 2012:viii) and 'convergence culture' (Jenkins, 2006:270), Studio Ghibli tend to accompany their upcoming films not just with merchandise but also with texts in their own right. For instance, prior to the release of *Wind*, Hayao Miyazaki released a short *manga* titled *Kaze Tachinu* (see '2013-nen Jiburi sakuhin 'Kaze Tachinu' to 'Kaguyahimegatari [sic]', 2012:1). Furthermore, the *bunkobon* book *Sono tanjō to eikō no kiroku*<sup>11</sup>, written by Jirō Horikoshi and first published in 1970, was re-released in 2012 by Kadokawa Publishing Co. (see 'Reisen sono tanjō to eikō no kiroku', N.D.) in collaboration with the marketing campaign of the Studio Ghibli film. The Disney campaign also displays elements of synergy. Yet due to a lack of familiarity with the source material these references remain entirely self-referential. For example, *The*

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<sup>11</sup> '零戦その誕生と栄光の記録'。'Zero-san: A Record of Birth and Glory' [my translation].

*Wind Rises* poster was briefly available through the Disney Store website (see 'The Wind Rises Poster', N.D.:1) in exchange for Disney Reward Points. This promotion is entirely self-reflexive in that its only point of reference is Disney's own paratextual campaign and the constructed narrative theming present within the design.

Conversely, the domestic market is able to provide a greater degree of synergy through the publishing industry, due to the fact that the narrative image is more fully fleshed out in the Japanese public consciousness. In this way, the American campaign focuses primarily on self-contained evidence of Western success, whereas the Japanese campaign centres upon the narrative image of the text as it is able to bolster this approach with cross-platform releases in the domestic marketplace.

Another coherent theme evident across the poster analyses is that the Japanese campaigns rely on anime being mainstream entertainment in the domestic marketplace, whereas the Disney strategy has to continuously shift to target the film at differing demographics. Yet, perhaps due to the increasing acceptance of anime in the West, the Disney campaigns have grown more similar to their Japanese counterparts over time. That is to say that whilst the posters for *Howl* were about as different from one another as possible, there were many more similarities between the *Ponyo* designs and by the time one reaches the *Wind* campaign the posters were almost identical with only a handful of alterations made by the Disney localizers. I argue that this convergence in promotional designs implies that the Western promotion for Ghibli films has evolved from a transferred, anticipatory approach to glocalization copied from the Disneyfication systemscape to one of a structured, responsive methodology

which requires less of a contextualisation for the American marketplace more familiar with the cartoon medium-genre.

### **TRAILER ANALYSIS**

Building on the insights provided to us by analyses of film posters, let us now move on to examine moving image marketing, specifically theatrical trailers. This examination adds to the burgeoning field of trailer analysis (Kernan, 2004; Johnston, 2009) by examining six trailers pertaining to the final three films of Hayao Miyazaki. In juxtaposition to the approach employed above regarding film posters, I first look at all three Japanese trailers in chronological order and then move on to their American counterparts. By analysing the materials in this manner, I demonstrate the same process expressed in the poster analysis: whilst the Japanese trailers have remained relatively consistent, the Western trailers have demonstrably shifted from representing Ghibli films as cartoons towards a portrayal of the texts as anime. That is to say that the period between *Howl* and *Wind* illustrates a marked change in approach towards the Disneyfication of Ghibli content and that the glocalization methodology shifts from a transferred, anticipatory approach to a structural, responsive one.

## DOMESTIC MARKET SIMILARITIES

By analysing the Japanese trailers for *Howl* (see 'Hauru no ugoku shiro yokokuhen', 2015), *Ponyo* (see 'Gake no Ue no Ponyo yokokuhen', 2009) and *Wind* (see 'THE WIND RISES Trailer | Festival 2013', 2013), I have found that the domestic strategy promotes a particularly rigid formula. Just as one is able to track promotional conventions through the Japanese poster campaign, one can accurately predict the structure of an original Ghibli trailer. After opening with the Tōhō logo (*Howl* trailer, 00:00:00 – 00:00:02; *Ponyo* trailer, 00:00:00 – 00:00:01; and *Wind* trailer, 00:00:04 – 00:00:06) immediately followed by the Ghibli logo (*Howl* trailer, 00:00:02 – 00:00:04; *Ponyo* trailer, 00:00:01 – 00:00:03; and *Wind* trailer, 00:00:06 – 00:00:08), the Hayao Miyazaki brand-name is deployed early once (*Howl* trailer, 00:00:04 – 00:00:09; *Ponyo* trailer, 00:00:04 – 00:00:07; and *Wind* trailer, 00:00:11 – 00:00:18) and then again towards the end (*Howl* trailer, 00:01:38 – 00:01:42; *Ponyo* trailer, 00:01:32 – 00:01:36; and *Wind* trailer, 00:03:48 – 00:03:52). Other recurring features include deployment of the brand-name of the famous composer Joe Hisaishi<sup>12</sup> (*Howl* trailer, 00:01:10 – 00:01:13; *Ponyo* trailer, 00:01:11 – 00:01:14; and *Wind* trailer, 00:01:44 – 00:01:51) and a slide featuring the catch copy of the film without any background imagery (*Howl* trailer, 00:00:12 – 00:00:15; *Ponyo* trailer, 00:01:39 – 00:01:41; and *Wind* trailer, 00:00:11 – 00:00:18). Whilst the language framing these brand-names may vary between references – inflecting the Hayao Miyazaki brand-name with, for example,

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<sup>12</sup> 久石 譲。'Joe Hisaishi'.

'*kantoku sakuhi*n' (see *Wind* trailer, 00:00:11 – 00:00:18)<sup>13</sup> ('A production directed by', my translation) or '*gensaku, kyakuhon, kantoku*' (see *Ponyo* trailer, 00:01:32 – 00:01:36)<sup>14</sup> ('An original screenplay, directed by', my translation) – the paratextual function of the brand-name deployment remains the same. In fact the only major shift in policy over these three examples is that, whilst the trailers for *Howl* and *Ponyo* make pronounced use of star-images like Kimura (see *Howl* trailer, 00:01:21 – 00:01:24) and Nara<sup>15</sup> (see *Ponyo* trailer, 00:00:31 – 00:00:36), the trailer for *Wind* relegates the star-images of performers like Hideaki Anno<sup>16</sup> to a much smaller space on the very final slide (see *Wind* trailer, 00:04:10 – 00:04:13).

There are further similarities which are harder to express visually in this thesis: the soundtrack is dominated by the title theme song of the film in question; there tends to be a few lines of dialogue from each major character; explanatory text written in the *tategaki* style often appears outlining the narrative image in detail; and the rhythm of the editing consistently proceeds at a relatively steady pace. Overall, the structure of the Japanese trailers for Ghibli films is thoroughly predictable and formulaic. Certainly there have been a few minor changes, such as the de-emphasis *Wind* places on star-images noted above, but for the most part the procedure for producing the Japanese

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<sup>13</sup>監督作品。

<sup>14</sup>原作・脚本・監督。

<sup>15</sup>奈良 柚莉愛。'Yuria Nara'.

<sup>16</sup>庵野 秀明。'Hideaki Anno'.

trailers is fixed. In contrast, the American trailers, which I am about to analyse in greater detail, follow no coherent pattern and the structure of the trailer is tailored to suit each particular text. I argue that the reason that the Japanese trailers are so similar is that the market for anime in its domestic environment is well established and static, whereas the global market for Ghibli products requires a specific re-contextualisation for the Disney family audience. For this reason, it is necessary to examine each of the Anglophone trailers individually and in a chronological manner, so that one can track the shifting representations over time.

### **DISNEYFYING HOWL'S TRAILER**

I consider the Anglophone trailer for *Howl* (see “‘Howl’s Moving Castle” Trailer (English version 2005)’, 2012) as particularly elucidative of the basic strategies employed by Disney when Ghibli products are marketed to Western markets. In many ways, it represents a transferred approach of promotion, very similar to the paratexts of Disney/Pixar films, such as *Monsters, Inc.* or *Finding Nemo*. Its approach is utterly uninhibited and forthright almost to the point of being a caricature of itself; every aspect of the trailer acts to Occidentalise the Japanese product and re-position the texts within an Anglophone context. It is absolutely critical that during the localized marketing process due attention is drawn to the author functions. This in itself would be normal for the paratextual material of any text, but the trailer for *Howl* takes this principle to extremes by depicting all three primary brand-names associated with the film twice (for Disney, see 00:00:13 – 00:00:16 and 00:01:10; for Studio Ghibli, see

00:00:16 – 00:00:19 and 00:01:12 – 00:01:14; and for Hayao Miyazaki, see 00:00:23 – 00:00:26 and 00:01:14 – 00:01:17). Denison posits a ‘blending together [of] Disney, Ghibli and Miyazaki to create a layered brand’ (2015:120) and in the replication and accentuation of these three brand-names, the promotion campaign can be seen to be particularly critical to Disneyfication’s modes of delivery. Just as the Japanese posters and trailers repeated the Hayao Miyazaki brand-name, in this case all three author functions are referenced once early on in the trailer and then replicated in a nearly identical fashion towards the end; in two of the three cases the exact same text overlay is deployed. Whilst certainly it is not uncommon for the brand-names deployed in the marketing stage to be repeated *ad nauseam*, the restating process ordinarily undertakes a certain degree of variance in the manner of retelling. Such methods might typically include the deployment of differing typefaces or altering the wording of the brand-names – for example, one might describe a film as being both ‘a Studio Ghibli production’ and a ‘film produced by Studio Ghibli’. I argue that the precise purpose of such an exact visual reproduction as seen here is indicative of a particularly rigid, transferred approach to Disneyfication.

The repetition of brand-names in the *Howl* trailer is not just limited to the six images reproduced above. Towards the very end of the trailer, in what might traditionally be referred to as the title card (00:01:30 – 00:01:34), the Disney and the Hayao Miyazaki brand-names are once again repeated. In this instance, the connection implied between Disney and Hayao Miyazaki is amplified by displaying the brand-names together on the same screen. This image has the additional purpose of establishing

Disney as having a claim of ownership over the text. By encouraging consumers to visit the website 'disney.com/castle' (see 'Howl's Moving Castle', N.D.), Disney is able to position *Howl* as another one of its intellectual properties.

The American *Howl* trailer also has two other noticeable visual characteristics. Firstly, that there is a further repetition centred on the American release date. Once again repetition becomes a necessary theme: the word 'June' appears twice (see 00:01:21 – 00:01:23 and 00:01:34 – 00:01:39) in the trailer and the narration track emphasises that the release will be occurring during the summer months. This emphasis on the American release date is another factor which positions *Howl* within the Western cinematic calendar as an American cartoon released in June 2005 rather than a Japanese anime screened in November 2004. Secondly, that the brand-name of Hayao Miyazaki is purposefully inflected with specific values in order to appeal more directly to Western audiences. During the first onscreen depiction of the Hayao Miyazaki brand-name (00:00:23 – 00:00:26), it behoves the Disney localization team to refer to the *auteur* as a 'master filmmaker' (see Denison, 2015:120) and, similarly, there is significant emphasis placed on his attainment of accolades, as evidenced through the inflection title card reading 'DIRECTOR OF THE ACADEMY AWARD® WINNING "SPIRITED AWAY" (00:00:28 – 00:00:30). By drawing attention to the accolades lauded on the filmmaker, they are able to position *Howl* and other Ghibli products as admirable anime artworks belonging to a canon of texts worthy of critical acclaim rather than common cartoon content aimed at a child audience. At first glance, the two points outlined above would seem to be inherently contradictory, but in fact the

deployment of release dates and inflections both serve the same overarching purpose: by including signifiers that appeal to child *and* adult audiences, one is able to reach the widest possible audience. To be clear, the primary demographic for the Western release remains the child cartoon consumer as evidenced by the majority of signifiers expressed in both the poster and trailer. Yet in order to attract the widest possible audience, both paratextual media inflect the Hayao Miyazaki brand-name with the purpose to attract an adult anime audience without deterring its core, child, cartoon consumers.

Having established the visual deployment of brand-names, release dates and inflections, one can now examine the aural narration track which accompanies these images. Repetition plays a further role in emphasising certain phrases, particularly when the aural of the soundtrack is utilised in conjunction with the visuality of the image track – an occurrence which, building on the work of Sergi (2004), Holly Rogers refers to as ‘audiovisual synchronicity’ (2013:537). The following passage lists the narrated dialogue in full, wherein the emboldened portions refer directly to either brand-names, release dates or inflections and the underlined segments indicate when the narration track directly vocalises the words currently on screen:

From **master filmmaker Hayao Miyazaki, the director of the Academy Award winning *Spirited Away***. This **summer** experience the epic tale of a young woman transformed by a mysterious curse, an enchanted moving castle, and the one wizard powerful enough to set her free. **Walt Disney Studios presents**

**a Studio Ghibli production** of **a Hayao Miyazaki film**; this **June** journey to amazing new worlds aboard *Howl's Moving Castle*. (my emphasis)

By accentuating the narration in this manner, one is immediately able to zero in on a number of critical points. In almost every instance in which the narration mentions a brand-name, release date or inflection, the accompanying text appears on screen word for word; indeed the brand-name Hayao Miyazaki appears in this fashion twice. Aside from the references to Disney itself, I argue that this audio-visual synchronicity is necessary because, at the time of American theatrical release in 2005, these particular inflections and brand-names are still relatively new to the Western market and in order for the audiences to become familiar with them, they require both vocalisation and visualisation. The familiar Disney brand identity is then essential to introduce these relatively new brand-names to a Western audience.

Another notable aspect of the voiceover is that it goes to great lengths to map out the narrative image of the film by describing 'the epic tale of a young woman transformed by a mysterious curse, an enchanted moving castle and the one wizard powerful enough to set her free'. The narrative image laid out here also mirrors exactly the narrative image evident through the three images present in the American poster campaign. Once again, by de-emphasising feminine presence and heightening masculine strength (Wells, 1998:192), the Disney localizers for *Howl* aim to streamline the Western audience's paratextual experience and remove any complicating factors that may deter them from purchasing and consuming the content. Moreover, one can

observe how closely tied the poster and the trailer are, indicating a campaign cohesion which is less evident within the following films.

As we have seen then, the trailer for *Howl* expends much of its energy contextualising author-image brand-names as well as defining the narrative image of this anime. This is to be expected to some extent as the concept of seriously viewing Ghibli films in a theatrical consumption context was a relatively novel concept. However, following the Oscar awarded to *Spirited Away*, one can begin to trace a tendency towards a more structured, responsive approach to Disney's glocalization with *Howl*, situated in these early years of transition, showcasing the anticipatory approach. As we move forward in time to the next film directed by Hayao Miyazaki, the American promotional campaigns continue to become less restricted by this rigid, anticipatory methodology transferred from Disney's own marketing strategies and Ghibli's representations are allowed to display increasingly more complex narrative images and brand-name deployments.

### **DISNEYFYING PONYO'S TRAILER**

I begin the analysis of *Ponyo's* trailer (see 'Ponyo Official English Language Trailer', 2009) at the same point in which I concluded the examination of *Howl's* trailer; that is, by turning to the narration in the soundtrack. Once again the narration stresses the layered brand of the three primary author-images – Disney, Ghibli and Hayao Miyazaki – as well as release dates and brand-name inflections. Just as before, the emboldened

sections equate to the above occurrences and the underlined fragments indicate when the narration aligns with the on screen text:

You'll never know when you meet someone who will change your life forever.

She wasn't like any other fish; this fish is getting her wish. On **August 14<sup>th</sup>**, something magical will be unleashed, and the world may never be the same.

Walt Disney Studios presents a Studio Ghibli film from Hayao Miyazaki, the Academy Award winning director of *Spirited Away*, comes an extraordinary motion picture event about the wonder of nature, the power of friendship and the spirit of adventure that lives over and under the sea. (my emphasis)

Straightaway one notices several differences between this narration and the one present in the *Howl* trailer. Firstly, there is no need for any vocalised repetition – each of the brand-names, release dates and inflections are stated just once in the voiceover. Secondly, with the exception of the Walt Disney Studios presents remark, the compulsion for audio-visual synchronicity is noticeably negated: each term now needs only to be articulated and not necessarily displayed. I argue that these alterations in approach to brand-names indicate that the Disney localization process no longer has to accentuate brand-name replication; in other words it is taken as a given that the various brand-names displayed belong to the same layered brand of author-images. That is to say, whilst all of the brand-names, release dates and inflections that are present in *Howl's* trailer remain a key selling point for *Ponyo's* promotional campaign, there is no further emphasis upon aural repetition and audio-visual synchronicity.

Thirdly, that whilst there are some references to the narrative image of *Ponyo*, the language used is intentionally vague and mysterious. Phrases like ‘when you meet *someone* [...] *something* magical will be unleashed [...] and the world *may* never be the same’ (my emphasis) serve to introduce the premise of the text without giving too much away, banking on the intrigue of an audience who are more familiar with the anime fantasyscape.

The final, notable facet of the narration track used in this trailer which warrants attention is perhaps the most fascinating: specifically, the subtle reference present in the last line. In describing *Ponyo* as ‘the spirit of adventure that lives over and under the sea’, the voiceover is implicitly linking the Ghibli text with the earlier Disney film *The Little Mermaid* through the latter film’s renowned theme song ‘Under the Sea’. This particular tune has been noted to possess the qualities of an earworm; as Donald Ash comments: ‘if I told you to sing “Under the Sea” right now, I know many of you, even if you don’t want to sing it, are playing the song in your head’ (2012:1). Whilst *The Little Mermaid* is undoubtedly not the sole source text for *Ponyo* – other scholars point to the Japanese mermaid folktale ‘Urashima Tarō’ (Lightburn, 2010:99; Bayles, 2015:1), aspects of Norse mythology (Birmingham, 2010:1) as well as the original ‘The Little Mermaid’ fairy-tale by Hans Christian Andersen (Fraser, 2010:27, Birmingham, 2010:1; Bayles, 2015:1) – for many Western consumers the primary point of reference remains the classic Disney animation (Rifá-Valls, 2011:90; Birmingham, 2010:1; Bayles, 2015:1). By concluding the narration in *Ponyo*’s trailer with the simple phrase ‘under the sea’, Disney is almost emphatically able to equate *Ponyo* and *The Little Mermaid*

without ever mentioning the latter's title and, by doing so, correlate *Ponyo* with certain notions of quality and entertainment often associated with the 'Disney Renaissance [...era which] spanned the years 1989 to 1999' (Pallant, 2011:xii).

Despite the subtler approach undertaken by the narration present in the soundtrack for *Ponyo*'s Western trailer, the image track is far more explicit in its technique. Of the three author-images comprising the layered brand, the Disney brand-name is given the most emphasis – the word Disney appears a total of four times in the trailer (00:00:00 – 00:00:02; 00:01:35 – 00:01:37; 00:02:05 – 00:02:08; and 00:02:14 – 00:02:17). In analysing these appearances one can comprehend the differing purposes behind each deployment of the Disney brand-name. Firstly, the Disney production logo (00:00:00 – 00:00:02) appears at the very beginning of the trailer, just as it does with every animation produced by Disney itself. In this way, *Ponyo* is immediately re-positioned as a Disney cartoon to Western audiences. Following this, the trailer spends the next minute and a half roughly outlining the film's narrative image. Yet because setting up the film necessitates alluding to Japanese culture – through names like Sōsuke and images including Japanese *kana* and *kanji* (00:00:23 – 00:00:24) – it is once again essential to reiterate the film's relationship to Disney. In this second instance (00:01:35 – 00:01:37), the Disney brand-name is actually re-contextualised into the fabric of the anime environment: the words 'Walt Disney Studios Presents' appear underwater and with an animated wave effect applied to the font. We are once again presented with a series of images from the film before encountering the Disney brand-name for the third time in the trailer's title card (00:02:05 – 00:02:08). The occurrence of the Disney

author-image on this occasion more directly asserts ownership over the text; by overstressing the notion that *Ponyo* is a co-production between Disney and Ghibli, the former is more concretely able to assert its authorship. Lastly, the final mention of Disney restates this claim of ownership in the trailer's closing image (00:02:14 – 00:02:17) by providing the details of the film's Anglophone website 'Disney.com/Ponyo' (see 'Ponyo', N.D.a). Just as we saw demonstrated in the trailer for *Howl*, this action serves to commodify the Ghibli text and transform it into another Disney product.

As I have demonstrated then, each of the references to the Disney brand-name in the *Ponyo* trailer have served a specific purpose and taken together they ensure a strong correlation between the Western cartoon studio and the Japanese anime text. Before moving on, there is a further exploitation of brand-names in the trailer that merits discussion. Towards the very end of *Ponyo's* trailer, one is presented with a slide which details a list of the vocal talent employed by Disney to re-dub the film, as referenced in 'Chapter Three – Stardom: Re-Dubbing and Star-Images' – the only Anglophone trailer to explicitly reference star-images at all. In this light, the trailer echoes the approach utilised in the American poster for *Ponyo* which deploys precisely the same 'star-cluster' (Denison, 2008b:142). Here, the clustered star-images serve two functions: firstly, to associate *Ponyo* with a degree of quality implied by the previous combined work of these stars and, secondly, through stars like Jonas and Cyrus, to denote a final implicit connection to the Disney company.

All in all, the American trailer for *Ponyo* sends a mixed message about Disney's target family demographic. Although author-images and star-images feature heavily in the image track to re-position the anime continuously within an Anglophone context, the aural track is much more nuanced and subtle in its inferences. Whilst the imagery relentlessly seems to pander towards the child cartoon market, the aural track of the trailer contains complexity that one could expect only an adult anime audience to notice. In short, this paratext is evidence of evolution in action: the American *Ponyo* trailer can be considered as an interstitial point in the transition between the two extremes of cartoon and anime, between *Howl* and *Wind*.

#### **DISNEYFYING WIND'S TRAILER**

The American trailer for *Wind* (see 'The Wind Rises - Official Trailer', 2013) is fundamentally distinct from the trailers for *Howl* and *Ponyo* in all possible respects, eschewing the expectations engendered by both English language trailers examined thus far. As a starting point, one can describe the American trailer for *Wind* as behaving like a redux version of the Japanese trailer. For the first time in an Anglophone Ghibli trailer, the film's primary musical track – 'Hikoukigumo' ['Vapour Trail'] by Yumi Matsutoya – becomes the focus of the soundtrack. What is more, unlike with *Ponyo* where the theme song was translated and performed in English, the song heard in the Western trailer for *Wind* is the original Japanese version of the song. In fact the American trailer goes even further than its Japanese counterpart; whereas in the original trailer a few lines of dialogue are spoken towards the beginning and the

end, the Western trailer focuses almost exclusively on the melody of 'Hikoukigumo', aside from a handful of diegetic sound effects from the film and a solitary vocalised giggle from Blunt as Nahoko. This development in itself is fascinating, as the trailer does almost nothing to position *Wind* within an Anglophone context. At no point are the star-images present within the film made explicit, unless one is expected to recognise the performance of Blunt from a single laugh.

Whilst both previous American trailers have imbued the promotional material with Hollywood's own brand of auralty in the form of explanatory narration, the Western trailer for *Wind* abjures these gratuitous 'Natural American English' (John Lasseter quoted in Denison, 2007:317) tones. This dramatic shift has massive implications: the Western audience no longer requires the authoritative American accent to legitimise the text. However, the aural narration track has to some extent been substituted by two aspects of the image track: reputable review inflections (00:01:00 – 00:01:03; 00:01:13 – 00:01:17; 00:01:24 – 00:01:27; and 00:01:37 – 00:01:40) and a form of intertitles (00:01:46 – 00:01:50; 00:01:53 – 00:01:58; and 00:02:00 – 00:02:06). Firstly, as regards the reputable reviews, the Western trailer for *Wind* echoes the approach normally reserved for poster design; in fact the precise quotation from Richard Corliss used in the trailer (00:01:00 – 00:01:03) is replicated within the American poster discussed above as the sole reputable review inflection. The difference between this quotation and the three found in the *Howl* poster design is that it does not provide allusions to either the film's narrative image, the Disney brand-name or indeed the inflection of the Academy Awards. Instead, the *Wind* reputable review, reading

‘vigorous, subtle, thematically daring, visually gorgeous’, assumes a (fore-) knowledge of the Hayao Miyazaki as a brand-name and, although it does describe the film, it does not reveal any aspect of the narrative image, only conventions that audiences have come to expect from the Ghibli branded-subgenre. Secondly, in regard to the intertitles, the full script reads as follows:

**A career marked by genius and wonder** where dreams have taken flight. Now  
... **the farewell masterpiece.** (my emphasis)

One can ascertain four key differences between the intertitle narration utilised in the trailer for *Wind* in comparison to the voiceover narration evident in the trailers for *Howl* and *Ponyo*. Firstly, the actual content of the message is much shorter in length; rather than three or four lengthy sentences, this passage is comprised of just a handful of words. Secondly, there is no reference to the narrative image of the film. Whereas the trailers for *Howl* and *Ponyo* took great care to introduce the protagonists of the film and the gist of the plotline, the closest one comes to narrative insight in *Wind*'s intertitle narration is the line ‘dreams have taken flight’ which alludes to the aeroplanes already clearly visible in the trailer. Thirdly, the majority of the intertitle narration serves as an inflection of the Hayao Miyazaki brand-name by discussing his canon as ‘a career marked by genius and wonder’ and describing *Wind* as ‘the farewell masterpiece’. In fact, during the ‘dreams have taken flight’ line, the on screen text goes further and includes some of the titles of the most popular films directed by Hayao Miyazaki in what may be termed a ‘textual-cluster’: *Howl* and *Ponyo* are

included but also mentioned are *Spirited Away*, *Laputa: Castle in the Sky* and *My Neighbor Totoro* (00:01:53 – 00:01:57). Through this phenomenon, one can observe that, whilst previously various studio logos have long dominated cinematic marketing (Grainge, 2007), in response to the popular and critical success of these films in English language markets the Disneyfication process has now developed to the extent of additionally accentuating textual brands as well as studio logos and authorial brand-names.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, despite the inflection noted above, neither Hayao Miyazaki, Ghibli, Disney nor any other brand-name is mentioned during this passage. These alterations to the traditional Anglophone explanatory narration have far-reaching implications. There is no further need to remind the Western audience they are watching a film by Ghibli or Hayao Miyazaki – these paratextual author-images are assumed to have become so mainstream that one does not need to have the brand-names repeated over and over again. That is not to say that the brand-names make no appearance in the trailer at all; yet in some ways their appearances are in and of themselves an even further departure from the formula laid out in *Howl* and *Ponyo*. For the first time in a Disney trailer of a Hayao Miyazaki film, the audience is presented with the Studio Ghibli production logo (00:00:30 – 00:00:32).

Furthermore, whilst the title card (00:02:10 – 00:02:15) does list the Academy Award inflection as well as the Ghibli and Hayao Miyazaki author-images, there is no mention of Disney anywhere; instead, the author function of Touchstone Pictures – itself a subsidiary of The Walt Disney Company – is deployed in its place. Finally, the closing

image (00:02:16 – 00:02:19) completes the elision of the Disney brand-name by displaying a webpage (see ‘The Wind Rises’, N.D.) that is not hosted under the ‘Disney.com’ domain and instead, whilst not explicitly stated in the paratext itself, the website is hosted on the popular blog site ‘Tumblr.com’. Indeed, even on the website itself there is no mention of Disney anywhere except in the miniscule copyright information in the far corner of the page. Thus the Disney company is able to limit its exposure through the deployment of both the Touchstone banner and the Tumblr website.

Each of the above points – the rejection of a vocal narrative track, the inclusion of the Ghibli production logo and the eschewal of deploying the Disney brand-name – point to a conclusion that places the *Wind* trailer as the pinnacle of the Disneyfication of Ghibli. Having garnered sufficient brand-name recognition, Ghibli products are able to be marketed without sheltering under the auspices of Disney or contextualised into American English by a ‘Voice of God’ narrator. To summarise this discussion of promotional material, one can conclude that the Japanese and American operations have starkly different marketing strategies. Whilst the domestic campaign has adhered to a static but successful formula, the Western tactic has experienced considerable change over the period of the decade in question. During the course of this paratextual analysis of *Howl*, *Ponyo* and *Wind*, one is able to track a shift in localization strategies. Just as in our earlier poster analysis, if one takes a moment to compare the Japanese trailers with their Anglophone equivalent, one notices that the Disney trailers have grown increasingly similar to the original trailers. From positioning Ghibli as a Disney

co-produced cartoon for a child audience, the American localization strategy has moved towards an approach whereby Ghibli films are increasingly portrayed as anime fantasyscape aimed primarily at an adult audience rather than the systemscape of the Western cartoonal culture.

## CONCLUSION:

### THE DISNEYFICATION OF MEDIA

#### CAMPAIGN ANALYSIS AND TECHNOLOGICAL EVOLUTION

The primary difficulty in formulating a thesis in an ongoing, constantly evolving field is that there are no fixed constants. Instead, one finds that the only consistent theme one can rely on is that every conceivable factor is characterised by a state of flux and adaptation. To put things in perspective, when I first began gathering sources for this thesis in 2010, both Studio Ghibli and Hayao Miyazaki were actively involved in filmmaking and *The Wind Rises* was nowhere near completion. Eight years have passed since that point and, despite rumours concerning the upcoming film *Boro the Caterpillar*, I now find myself referring to their cinema in the past tense, as an *oeuvre* that is no longer *emerging* (Atkinson, 2014, my emphasis), but one which has wholly *emerged*.

Yet it is not just the subject matter that is constantly shifting. Over the past seven years, the processes of Disneyfication have evolved alongside this study. Disney's casting policy regarding the Western star-images which have been attached to the films has grown much more calculated over time to the point that emphasis placed upon specific aspects of a star-image are accentuated in paratextual materials in order to adhere a themed meta-narrative to the film, as in the case of Blunt's appeal to a mature family audience in *Wind* (see 'Chapter Three – Stardom: Re-Dubbing and Star-

Images'). John Lasseter is increasingly deployed as the facilitating bridge between the West and Hayao Miyazaki's brand-name outside of the context of a specific film's promotional campaign, as seen through his introduction of Hayao Miyazaki in the 2014 Academy Awards (see 'Chapter Four – Authorship: Auteur-Stars and Author Functions'). The promotional strategies utilised in the West have shifted in many ways, but the campaign analysis utilised throughout this thesis shows that the systemscape of Disneyfication has shifted towards a more responsive, subtle approach to relaying signifiers like author brand-names and star-images; one need only compare the increasingly less cluttered website layouts for *Howl*, *Ponyo* and *Wind*. All of these trends which have developed and evolved since 2010 are united by the common thread of technology: the continuously developing rise of consumer technology; the increasing importance of cyber-space and social media presence(s); and, most critically for the campaign analysis utilised throughout this thesis, the shifting site of the modern-day paratext, no longer 'created for the purpose of projecting in theatres to promote a film's theatrical release' (Kernan, 2004:1), but increasingly uploaded online and promoted by the studios themselves, as Disney opted to do with the theatrical trailer for *Ponyo* ('Ponyo Official English Language Trailer', 2009) and *The Wind Rises* poster available through the Disney Store website (see 'The Wind Rises Poster', N.D.:1) in exchange for Disney Reward Points.

It is in this field of technology that one finds remaining contemporaneously relevant an increasingly demanding proposition. Although Youtube had existed for four years by 2010, it was still developing as a platform and was in the process of becoming

mainstream and the ubiquitous spread of the platform since then has been fascinating to behold. Today, Youtube plays a critical role in the dissemination of paratextual content pertaining to Studio Ghibli, including several star-image interviews, behind the scenes footage and, perhaps most importantly, cinematic trailers, all of which I have referenced throughout this thesis. The latter example is particularly relevant because of how one can see the technology actually shaping production strategies and consumption patterns: nowadays one takes it for granted that any given film trailer is just a few clicks away on Youtube, but prior to 2006 and the creation of Youtube this was not always the case. Indeed, one can actually map this trajectory using the official Disney websites for our three case studies – *Howl* (2004), predating Youtube by two years, necessarily links to a list of internally hosted videos in a range of differing file formats and quality settings including Quicktime, Windows Media Player and Real Player (see ‘Howl’s Moving Castle’, N.D.); *Ponyo*, despite being released two years after the formation of Youtube, also offers a range of internally hosted video links on their website (see ‘Ponyo: Viewing Options’, N.D.), although separately the official Walt Disney Animation Studios Youtube channel did opt to release the trailer on Youtube two weeks into the American theatrical run (see ‘Ponyo Official English Language Trailer’, 2009); and *Wind*, exhibited in 2013 and comfortably within the current era of the mainstream acceptance of YouTube, provides only a YouTube video embedded into Tumblr (see ‘The Wind Rises’, N.D.).

As Kernan (2004:207) and Johnston (2009:23) have previously noted, this shift in technology with regard to promotional paratexts fundamentally alters the

consumption context of promotional materials on a scale that cannot be understated. That is to say that the digital consumer expects to be able to access paratextual content – incorporating trailers but also including posters, behind the scenes footage, interviews, original soundtracks and a multitude of other supporting ephemera – on their own terms using mainstream services such as Youtube. This progression is due to simplicity and ease of access – the Youtube service does not require a notable degree of technical knowledge to operate, nor does it require a choice between file formats or quality settings – but also, perhaps more significantly, uniformity: arguably the first, and most likely final, port of call for a consumer looking for a trailer today would be Youtube, eliminating the need to locate and navigate official websites. As alluded to above, author function entities such as Disney now operate their own official Youtube channels where one can easily locate various trailers and paratextual content pertaining to their brand network. Indeed, one might even go as far as to argue that the consumption context(s) of paratextual material have shifted to such a degree that providing an online version of an easily locatable, good quality paratext is perhaps more important than the traditional methods of advertising, such as pre-screening trailers in cinema theatres or positioning paper posters and billboards. As Johnston, writing in 2009, records: '[t]he ability to download, display and save complex visual information via the computer screen has altered trailer dissemination and structure, possibly forever.' (2009:137) Johnston continued to postulate at the time of his writing that 'the growth of mobile media in both videophones and portable music players suggest that the introduction of a specific trailer that targets the smaller screens of these dissemination technologies will happen, and [...] trailer production techniques may be altered once again.' (2009:149) I argue that through the ubiquity of Youtube's

dissemination of trailers and other paratexts, this revolution has now happened, leading to the advent of the paratextual 'media event' (Hills, 2014:37) whereby paratexts are no longer defined by their 'limited theatrical shelf life' (Johnston, 2009:23).

This evolution in technology has, in turn, directly impacted upon the paratextual comparison between these three films as presented in this thesis. Using campaign analysis to read *across* promotional campaigns, one must remain mindful throughout of this not insignificant socio-cultural factor of technological progress. Yet it is my position that this evolution benefits the applicability of this research and I argue that these three films present a viable case study for analysing promotional campaigns during this specific time period of technological evolution; not just trends in the Studio Ghibli branded-subgenre or the anime phenomenon, but the broader Disneyfication processes at work beyond the boundaries of the Disney company itself, as well as its applicability to broader production and promotion practices and paratextual consumption patterns.

Terrance Lindvall and Matthew Melton posit that 'of all genres, cartoons seem particularly suited to deconstructing the ontological nature of the film medium itself' (1997:208). It is my argument that due to its relationship with ontology, animation exists in a unique position within the moving-image industry whereby it is possible to not only gain a privileged insight into the form of the Disneyfication systemscape in the context of the animation industry, but also to extrapolate the results of this analysis on

to the live-action moving-image industry. As Napier proceeds to summarise, 'animated space has the potential to be context free, drawn wholly out of the animator's or artist's mind. It is thus a particularly apt candidate for participation in a transnational, stateless culture' (2005:24). Denison also maintains that animated imagery is 'better placed than many live-action films to endure the vagaries of dubbing and translation' (2007:319), which suggests that during the translation process which occurs between two linguistic cultures, an animated text is privileged over a live-action text as it is removed from concerns of a fixed, physical space representative of the originating or domestic nation in question. In essence, I argue that the translation processes present in all forms of Disneyfied media are more evident in analyses of animation due to its unique relationship with ontology. Yet these same processes are nonetheless indistinguishable from those at work within their live-action counterparts. As such, this campaign analysis case study of the Disneyfication of the anime medium-genre can be utilised when discussing paratextual evolution of technology, as might be addressed in future promotional analyses.

### **DISNEYFICATION AND HYBRID CONSUMPTION**

It is important to note that certain symptoms which might at first appear to be clear indicators of Disneyfication could instead be attributed to local issues; that is to say, anime begins its trajectory in its domestic market. Perhaps the biggest challenge facing Japanese cultural soft power is its rapidly declining birth rate (Coulmas, 2007; Swanson, 2015:1) – an intensely broad and complex issue which is well beyond the

scope of this research to cover effectively. Suffice to say, that the domestic production and consumption of anime and the declining birth rate of Japan are inextricably linked to at least some degree, with some commentators going as far as to suggest that anime and the rise of *'hikikomori'* (Annett, 2014:16) amidst Japanese fans has played a direct role in this depopulation (Rani, 2013:1; Hairston, 2010:312). In 2015 I held an interview<sup>17</sup> with acclaimed anime director Naoyoshi Shiotani – an industry professional who has not only authored successful animated films such as *Psycho-Pass: The Movie / Gekijouban Saiko Pasu* (Naoyoshi Shiotani and Katsuyuki Motohiro, 2015), but also worked as an animator on *Spirited Away*. He expressed concern over the declining birth rate of Japan and suggested that this was a worrisome issue for anime producers, continuing to note that there were fewer anime being produced that children could enjoy, especially now that Hayao Miyazaki has retired. The point I believe Naoyoshi Shiotani is making here is that anime has not only a declining but an ageing audience and as such the target audience of anime and, in turn, the subject matter of anime narratives, must adapt to more mature audiences. Naturally this social change is a slow process and no doubt there will be a domestic child market for anime for many years to come, but I maintain one can already see the beginnings of this trend in recent anime production. Although Naoyoshi Shiotani suggested that Studio Ghibli primarily creates anime suitable for all ages, nonetheless, it has produced much more adult works, most notably the Isao Takahata epic *Grave of the Fireflies* and, of course, *Wind*.

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<sup>17</sup> At the 'Hyper Japan Christmas Market' in London on the 28<sup>th</sup> November 2015.

The point to be made here is that precisely because the kinds of anime produced by Studio Ghibli and other studios is increasingly mature in nature, the re-marketing campaigns headed by Disney and other Western localizers must similarly adapt. That is to say that the evolution in Disneyfication promotional strategies in terms of targeting an increasingly complex and broad family audience cannot be wholly attributed to the systemscape of Disneyfication and the evolution in production practices within the anime fantasyscape is at least partially responsible. Paradoxically, in and of itself, this revelation hints at a symptom of Disneyfication through the need to understand it via the hybrid consumption of both original and re-distributed contexts. More studies of Disneyfication, encompassing a wider range of source material from multiple cultural sources, need to be undertaken in order to ascertain broader patterns of (para)textual consumption and variant audience appeal.

This thesis argues that it is beneficial to study Disneyfication in terms of stardom, authorship and promotion simultaneously and the reasoning behind this approach is that, in doing so, one uncovers certain symptoms of Disneyfication: 'synergy' (Wasko, 2001:70) and 'hybrid consumption' (Bryman, 2004:57). That is to say, Disneyfication actively encourages readings to be undertaken across 'different institutional spheres' (2004:57), following the 'master principle [...of] getting people to *stay longer*' (2004:57-8, emphasis in original). Thus, it is now imperative to return to the deployment of star-images, author brand-names and inflections to ascertain which hybrid readings may be made across the paratextual campaigns.

As I posit in 'Chapter Three – Stardom: Re-Dubbing and Star-Images', regardless of the information available at the time of production, the star-images of Bale and Simmons influence a subsequent reading of *Howl* in a very different manner to their presumed intended impact. Despite the fact that star-imagery is not particularly emphasised in the posters and trailers of *Howl*, these two star-images are promoted through other means, such as the behind-the-scenes paratext which Disney often includes in DVD releases. Mirroring the anachronisms discussed with regard to stardom, one can observe similar patterns in the deployment of various author functions, particularly *vis-a-vis* revising the brand-names of Studio Ghibli and Hayao Miyazaki: viewings of earlier Studio Ghibli films will be affected by the fact that the studio appears to currently be in and out of *hiatus* status in terms of crafting its own in-house feature-length productions and the retirement status of its most famed director is once more in doubt. On the other side of the Pacific, the Disney brand-name has undergone a significant, if perhaps less dramatic, metamorphosis by purchasing both the *Star Wars* and *Marvel* franchises. This move is presumably in an effort to align itself more closely with an unquestionably mainstream target audience, yet one which pertains more to the young adult demographic than Disney's more traditional family fare. Less favourably, John Lasseter has taken a leave of absence since becoming embroiled in a series of alleged sexual misconduct incidents and there remains a question mark over whether he will return to a senior position within Disney (LaPorte, 2018:1). Thus, (at least) six major star-images and brand-names associated with the film – Bale, Simmons, Hayao Miyazaki, Lasseter, Studio Ghibli and Disney – signify vastly different readings today than they may have done in 2004 and, likewise, a case could be made for the remaining star-images and brand-names to be likewise revised. This recalls

Wells' earlier point that Disneyfication separates the narrative and the text, or in this context the intertextual digression and the paratextual signifier. The point to be stressed here is that paratextual narratives are not inherently fixed and static – instead, they can be thought of as a dynamic map which point to signifiers like star-images and author functions which themselves are labels in a constant state of re-appraisal – and, due to the increased availability of the modern-day paratext, the processes of Disneyfication must take into account this mutable nature of paratextual signification.

Similarly, one could make a link between Denison's concepts of both star-clusters and star-pairs and other branded clusters. That is to say, that just as one could identify Neeson and Cyrus as being a part of *Ponyo's* wider star-cluster (see 'Chapter Three – Stardom: Re-Dubbing and Star-Images') or Gordon-Levitt and Blunt forming the critical star-pair in *Wind* (see 'Chapter Three – Stardom: Re-Dubbing and Star-Images'), one might describe Hayao Miyazaki, Studio Ghibli and Disney as the crucial author-cluster, or as Denison describes it the layered brand, that is emphasised in every aspect of the marketing campaign, or the author-pair of Hayao Miyazaki and John Lasseter as an important factor in bridging the divide between East and West. Going further, one might be able to identify secondary clusters, including inflection-clusters which are grouped together, such as describing Hayao Miyazaki as both a 'master filmmaker' and 'an Academy Award winner' (see 'Chapter Five – Promotion: Disneyfying the Paratext') or textual-clusters, such as advertising *Wind* based on the strength of *Howl*, *Ponyo*, *Spirited Away*, *Laputa: Castle in the Sky* and *My Neighbor Totoro* (see 'Chapter Five –

Promotion: Disneyfying the Paratext'). Whilst all of these clusters are evident to varying extents, I postulate that perhaps the most insightful groupings are those which incorporate more than one category of star-image or brand-name, such as the accentuated connection between John Lasseter and Billy Crystal in *How's Behind the Scenes* paratext (see 'Chapter Four – Authorship: Auteur-Stars and Author Functions'), the association between Cyrus and Disney (see 'Chapter Three – Stardom: Re-Dubbing and Star-Images') or the 'Academy Award winner' inflection and the Hayao Miyazaki brand-name which is almost ubiquitously utilised across the Disney marketing campaigns for all three films. All of these hybridized connections serve to show how interconnected the whole process of re-branding has become. No longer can a distributor solely provide the name of the director and the lead actor, instead they must construct a complex network of brand-names and star-images incorporating star-pairs, star-clusters, auteur-stars, author functions, inflections and textual-clusters, highlighting whichever connections between these nodes that they deem to be beneficial to the text's overall publicity. Denison utilises the term 'brand networks' (2015:118) that are themselves comprised of reticulated brand-clusters, brand-names and star-images, the relations between which are indissolubly circuitous and labyrinthine. These brand networks are in themselves further evidence of the need to understand Disneyfication in terms of hybrid consumption and that to understand Disneyfication's processes one needs to read across different institutional spheres.

## **MEDIA MIX AND SELF-DISNEYFICATION**

Henry Jenkins propagates the concept of a 'convergence culture' (2006), writing that

convergence represents a paradigm shift – a move from medium-specific content toward content that flows across multiple media channels, toward the increased interdependence of communications systems, toward multiple ways of accessing media content, and toward ever more complex relations between top-down corporate media and bottom-up participatory culture. (2006:243)

This convergence principle was then expanded upon in relation to Japanese animation by Steinberg's discussion of the 'media mix' (2012:viii). This argument provides a useful history for early anime and provides a medium-specific, cognizant term for discussing anime specifically. Steinberg categorises the media mix as a transmedia phenomenon which evolved in Japan in semi-isolation from similar practices in the West (2012:viii), and, whilst Steinberg's historiographical work has revolutionised our understanding of anime and its relationship to supporting texts such as 'character merchandising' (2012:xvii), I posit that the concept of anime's media mix should be updated to include two further aspects: the alternate submedia outside of animation such as the 'spaces, experiences and events' (Denison, 2010:546) of the Ghibli Museum, as well as those instances of convergence culture between the fantasyscape of the Japanese anime and the systemscape of the Disneyfied, Western cartoon. As pointed out in 'Chapter Four –

Authorship: Auteur-Stars and Author Functions', certain elements of the Ghibli Museum are comparable to the systems of 'control' evident in Disney theme parks (Bryman, 2004:132). Moreover, within the paratexts themselves, the relationship between John Lasseter and Billy Crystal is carried over from the cartoonal context of *Monsters, Inc.* to the Disneyfication process of Ghibli's *Howl*. Such complex cross-pollinations between Western and Eastern players, which is to say the interactions between convergence cultures and media mixes, indicates the 'deterritorialisation' (Morley and Robins, 1995:1) of globalization, but also decries the need for a new understanding of a convergent media mix which incorporates the blending of the cartoon and anime global flows.

One has long been able to observe clearly such a media mix shift in franchises like *Pokémon* which are traditionally associated with children (Carter, 2011) through the temporary existence of *Pokémon* theme parks (Ashcraft, 2015:1) as well as the continued existence of so-called 'Pokémon Centres' which sell *Pokémon* merchandise. Yet increasingly one can observe more respected brand networks following suit. Hernández-Pérez writes that '[i]t is clear that the Ghibli Corporation has achieved a considerable economic and cultural success by following strategies similar to those of the Disney brand.' (2016:309) As alluded to above, Studio Ghibli, itself, propagates an inordinate amount of profitable paratextual ephemera, including a vast plethora of merchandise and the Studio Ghibli Museum experience as well as the existence of 'specialist retail outlets' (Denison 2015:125). These branded spaces include both the *Mamma Aiuto!* store within the Studio Ghibli Museum itself and the affiliated 'Donguri

Garden' chain of stores which exclusively sell Studio Ghibli merchandise, in addition to the countless retail outlets that sell Ghibli products alongside merchandise from other brand networks.

Rumours of further Ghibli paratextual spaces have abounded in recent months. In 2015, there were rumours that Miyazaki planned to open a Ghibli themed nature park on Kume Island by 2018 (Wang, 2015:1,) although a lack of updates on this project question whether this park is still going ahead at any point. More recently, on the 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2017, Governor Hideaki Omura of Aichi prefecture and Ghibli producer Toshio Suzuki announced the construction of a Ghibli theme park based on the film *My Neighbor Totoro*, entitled tentatively '*Totoro no furusato mura*', or 'Totoro's Home Village' (my translation), due to open in 2020 ('Ghibli theme park starring Totoro planned for Aichi', 2017:1). On the one hand, this development can describe a known factor about anime's fantasyscape: that it utilises 'cute *kyara* [...such as Totoro which] move easily across media and encourage affective bonds with products, making them the perfect vehicle for national and transnational consumer cultures' (Annett, 2014:185). Denison proceeds to comment that Ghibli is actively involved in 'expand[ing] Totoro's meanings from a character into a brand icon' (2015:125). In such a light, one can argue that Ghibli's decision to create a theme park centred on Totoro's *kyara* is a continuation of its long-standing practice in appealing to global 'anime tourists' (Denison, 2010).

However, on the other hand, one might also argue that this transformation of Totoro into a corporate entity mirrors how Mickey Mouse has been ‘drained [...] of “mouse-ness,” and whatever he has come to represent it is clearly much more connected to corporate rather than animal identity’ (Wells, 2009:168-9). Pallant builds on this observation, noting that one might describe Mickey as ‘an animated demigod, globally disseminating Disney culture.’ (2011:82) Bryman describes the process of self-evident logo branding as a particular form of Disneyfication theming called ‘reflexive theming’ (2004:19) in which ‘the organization does not draw upon external devices for its narratives; instead, the thematic elements are internally generated and then continuously reproduced.’ (2004:18-9) That is to say, the evolution of Totoro from cute *kyara* to reflexively-themed, corporate demigod acts as a sign of Ghibli’s self-Disneyfication, whereby the studio attempts to take upon itself the modes of delivery of the Disneyfication systemscape. In this light, the construction of a Totoro Land theme park which draws upon beloved animated characters directly mirrors the foundation of Disney’s theme parks and the Disneyfication elements of control, merchandising and hybrid consumption that accompanies such a project.

Throughout this thesis it has been suggested that Studio Ghibli appears to be in a period of reduced production. Yet this assertion is only partially true and at this juncture requires explicative correction. Although *The Wind Rises* remains the latest, complete, feature-length film directed by Hayao Miyazaki, he has continued work on short films that are to be aired exclusively in the Studio Ghibli Museum and is rumoured to be directing *Boro the Caterpillar* slated for release in 2021 (Carroll,

2016:1). Whilst *When Marnie Was There / Omoide no Mānii* (Hiromasa Yonebayashi, 2014) does indeed mark their final film produced fully in-house, Studio Ghibli have since entered into an age of co-productions and distributional partnerships. A televised anime series co-produced between Studio Ghibli and Polygon Pictures and directed by Gorō Miyazaki titled *Sanzoku no Musume Rōnya / Ronia the Robber's Daughter* (2014 – 2015) aired on NHK in Japan and is currently in the process of being re-dubbed and re-distributed by the UK based company Serious Lunch, who have purchased worldwide rights outside of Japan and Scandinavia (Green, 2015:1). Perhaps more significantly, a French / Japanese art house co-production film between French studio Wild Bunch and Studio Ghibli (P. Chapman, 2015:1) entitled *The Red Turtle* (Michaël Dudok de Wit, 2016) garnered critical acclaim, being nominated for the Best Animated Feature Film Oscar at the 89<sup>th</sup> Academy Awards. Moreover, Ghibli is undertaking an increasingly distributional role, as Denison notes in her comment that 'Studio Ghibli's animation brand is [...] buying up what it sees as similar texts and incorporating them under its umbrella to extend its brand meanings' (2015:123). By purchasing the rights and re-distributing Western animations (Osmond, 2014:1) like *The Illusionist / L'illusionniste* (Sylvain Chomet, 2010) or *The King and The Mockingbird / Le Roi et l'oiseau* (Paul Grimault, 1980), the Studio Ghibli brand network has now gone full circle to occupy the space of a self-Disneyfied mode of delivery.

At present, the impacts of the above texts and developments upon the global brand networks of both Hayao Miyazaki and Studio Ghibli have yet to become fully evident, but they do point the way towards a future where Studio Ghibli tends toward an

increased reliance on corporate partnerships, hybrid consumption, merchandising, limited exposure and diversified expansion – all of which are classic symptoms of Disneyfication. Whatever the future might hold, one can increasingly discuss Studio Ghibli not just in terms of its animation output, but in terms of its brand-name through which it sells DVDs, merchandise and destination tickets to ‘anime tourism’ (Denison, 2010) destinations. This signifies that Ghibli is adopting the modes of delivery (Bryman, 2004:158) of Disneyfication and that rather than have its own products Disneyfied by its corporate partners in the West, Studio Ghibli is actively taking up the practices of self-Disneyfication and beginning to take control of the globalization of its brand identity.

In *The Kingdom of Dreams and Madness*, Hayao Miyazaki opines on the future of Studio Ghibli that ‘the future is clear. It’s going to fall apart. I can already see it. What’s the use worrying? It’s inevitable.’ (01:33:55 - 01:34). I would argue that in the context of Studio Ghibli, as an *animation studio*, this would be a correct assumption, but that, as a *brand network*, its brand circulation as a Disneyfied mode of delivery has only just begun and that the site of the labour has started to shift away from the Western agency of Disney itself, with Ghibli displaying an increasing interest in maintaining the systemscape of Disneyfication. In this sense, recalling the title of this thesis, Studio Ghibli anime is, despite a decline in production, still very much in the process of going global, insofar as that their brand circulation still voyages around the globe. Yet the manner in which future Ghibli Disneyfication is likely to occur will not depend on the ‘transferred’ (Bryman, 2004:12) localization practices of the Disney company itself,

which insists on mutating anime's fantasyscape into the cartoon format, but upon an increasingly 'structural' (2004:12) approach of self-Disneyfication, taking the globalization of its films into its own hands through a popularisation of the anime medium-genre.

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